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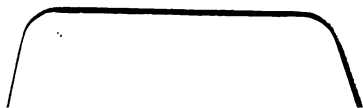
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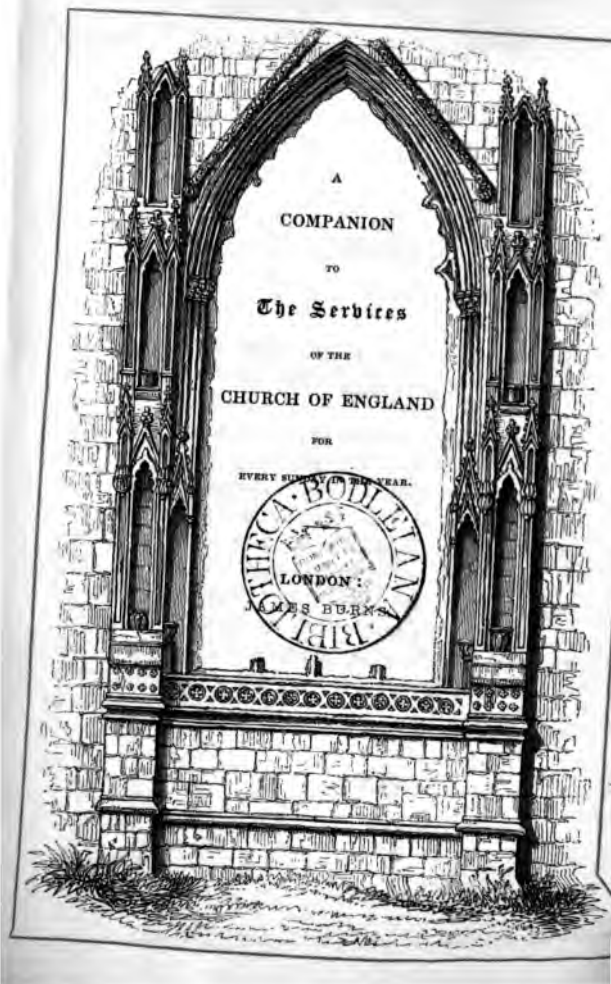
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A Companion

TO THE

SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

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Great New Street, Fetter Lane.



A
COMPANION

TO

The Services

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FOR

EVERY SUNDAY IN THE YEAR.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little book consists of extracts from the works of writers who have followed the course of the Christian year. The object was, to choose such portions of their writings as might be useful to the young and unlearned,—omitting those parts of the sermons which seemed to require more knowledge of books or experience of life,—and in the comment on the Church Services attempting sometimes to give the author's meaning in easier language. It is hoped that there can be no irreverence towards the writers from whom these selections are made, in thus endeavouring to bring parts of their writings within the reach of a class of readers not otherwise likely to attain to them.

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O HAPPY soul! when the offices of religion do measure out to thee the time and the year, and devotion in its decent dress is thy calendar; when as thou dost receive with pleasure the fruits of each season, which the bounty of thy God causeth the earth to bring forth to thee; the sun and heaven yielding successively their grateful changes, so thou mayest measure out thy time with suitable variety of praise and devotion; aspiring in each season after some new grace in return, till thou hast run the circle of them all with the year, and summed up thy gain at last in a happy eternity.

Happy soul! to whom each new week is welcome, and known not by the almanack, or the outward face of the year, but by the grace it proposes to thy meditation and practice in its Collect, while thou dost join with the whole Church in making this theme thy study and thy care; when each month is known to thee, not by the old heathen name it bears, but the blessed saints it commemorates, welcoming with joy their holy festivals.

O happy souls, who unite in this blessed study! may my soul enter into your secrets, and dwell with you in this sacred exercise. May I ever rejoice in this orderly revolution of time; ever be with you, the children of the kingdom, the favourites of Heaven, the delights of my soul, and heirs of eternity, in all the happy periods of this revolution; and thus employed, through the mercies of our good God, may we roll insensibly on from grace to glory, from time to eternity, and from commemorating the saints here, to enjoying our Lord and them for ever hereafter. Amen.

Life of James Bonnell.

Præces.

Liturgia.

Companion to the Services

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FOR

EVERY SUNDAY IN THE YEAR.

PART I.

Advent — Lent.

LONDON:

**JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.**

1843.



A Companion
TO THE
SUNDAY SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

PSALM XCVI.

SING the song unheard before,
Sing the God Whom we adore,
Sing, all earth, unto the Lord,
Praise His Name, and bless His Word.

Tidings tell, from day to day,
Of His high and saving way ;
Shew all lands His glorious light,
Heathens all His deeds of might.

Tell them, God is great always,
Prais'd, and high above all praise ;
Thron'd in awful majesty,
Far above all gods is He.

Heathen gods—frail gods are they—
Heaven He made Whom we obey ;
Grace and honour round Him shine,
Power and splendour in His shrine.

Households of the realms abroad,
 Bring ye to the Lord our God,
 Bring ye to the Lord aright,
 Glory and eternal might.

To the LORD Whom we proclaim,
 Bring the glory of His Name ;
 With th' unbloody offering come,
 Enter in the hollest room.

Own the LORD with prostrate heart,
 In His beauty high apart ;
 Shrink, all earth, before His face ;
 Speak to every realm and race ;

Tell it out, " Jehovah reigns :
 Fix'd and sure the world remains ;
 Fix'd, and leaning on His hand,—
 Righteous Judge of every land."

Heaven is bright with bliss and mirth ;
 Springs for joy the solid earth ;
 Ocean, with His thundering tones,
 Through his worlds the rapture owns ;

Field exults, and meadow fair,
 With each bud and blossom there ;
 In the lonely woodlands now
 Chants aloud each rustling bough,

Chants before th' all-judging Lord :—
 See, He comes, He comes ador'd ;
 Comes to judge the world aright,
 Nations by His own true light.

First Sunday in Advent.

" Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : they shall behold
 the land that is very far off."—*Isaiah xxxiii. 17.*

*YEAR after year, as it passes, brings us the
 same warnings again and again ; and none, per-
 haps, more impressive than those with which it*

comes to us at this season. The very frost and cold, rain and gloom, which now befall us, forebode the last dreary days of the world, and, in religious hearts, raise the thought of them. The year is worn out; spring, summer, autumn, each, in turn, have brought their gifts and done their utmost; but they are over, and the end is come. One year goes, and then another; but the same warnings recur. The frost or the rain comes again; the earth is stripped of its brightness; there is nothing to rejoice in: and then, amid this unprofitableness of earth and sky, the well-known words return; the prophet Isaiah is read; the same epistle and gospel, bidding us "awake out of sleep," and welcome Him "that cometh in the name of the Lord;" the same collects, beseeching Him to prepare us for judgment. O blessed they who obey these warning voices, and look out for Him whom they have not seen, because they "love His appearing!"

Before us lies a time when we must have the sight of our Maker and Lord face to face. We are destined to come before Him — nay, and to come before Him in judgment; and that on our first meeting, and that suddenly. We have to stand before His righteous presence, and that one by one. One by one we shall have to endure His holy and searching eye. At present we are in a world of shadows. Suddenly it will be rent in twain and vanish away, and our Maker will appear. He will look on us, while we look on Him.

We are told in Scripture that good and bad shall see God.

On the one hand, holy Job says, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job xix. 26, 27).

On the other hand, unrighteous Balaam says, "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numb. xxiv. 17).

Christ says to His disciples, "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke xxi. 28); and to His enemies, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

And it is said generally of all men, on the one hand, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7).

And on the other: "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

Again: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

And again: "They shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii. 4).

And as they see Him, so will He see them; for His coming will be to judge them. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," says *St. Paul* (2 Cor. v. 10).

Again: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live,

saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 10-12).

And again: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32).

Such is our first meeting with our God; and it will be as sudden as it is intimate.

"Yourselves know perfectly," says St. Paul, "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. v. 2, 3).

This is said of the wicked; elsewhere He is said to surprise good as well as bad.

"While the Bridegroom tarried," the wise and foolish virgins "all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet Him."

Surely it is our plain wisdom, our bounden duty, to prepare for this great change. "Prepare to meet thy God." "Go ye out to meet Him."

It is most merciful in God to vouchsafe to us the means of preparation, and such means as He has appointed.

We should come to all His ordinances, considering them as forestallings and first-fruits of that sight of Him which one day must be.

When we kneel down in prayer in private, let

body; let us hasten to do by a voluntary act what will one day come on us of necessity. Let us wait for Him solemnly, fearfully, hopefully, patiently, obediently; let us be resigned to His will while active in good works. Let us pray Him ever to "remember us when He cometh in His kingdom;" to remember all our friends; to remember our enemies; and to visit us according to His mercy here, that He may reward us according to His righteousness hereafter.

" Thus bad and good their several warnings give
Of His approach Whom none may see and live.
Faith's ear, with awful still delight,
Counts them like minute-bells at night,
Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn,
Whilst to her funeral pile this aged world is borne.

But what are Heaven's alarms to hearts that cower
In wilful slumber, deepening every hour;
That draw their curtains closer round,
The louder swells the anthem's sound?
Lord, ere our trembling lamps sink down and die,
Touch us with chastening hand, and let us feel Thee
nigh."

Services for the First Sunday in Advent.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah i.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah ii.

Epistle, Romans xiii. 8, &c.

Gospel, St. Matthew, xxi. 1, &c.

The Collect.—Almighty God, give us grace
*that we may cast away the works of darkness, and
put upon us the armour of light, now in the
time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus*

Christ came to visit us in great humility ; that in the last day, when He shall come again, in His glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

The Sun of the Church is our Saviour Christ—her light and her life. His rising upon her with healing in His wings drives away the darkness of sin and sorrow, and brings in the cheering light of holy love and heavenly joy.

The **Gospel** for the last Sunday of the yearly course proclaimed Him : “ This is of a truth that Prophet that should *come* into the world.” And the **Gospel** for this day welcomes His Advent, with acclamations of joy, as the Prince of peace and salvation : “ Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. Hosanna [Save now, we beseech Thee] to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”

The word *Advent* signifies *coming*—the coming of Christ. His expected coming, the Desire of all nations, to redeem our fallen race, was the hope which supported man from Adam’s fall ; it was foretold by all God’s holy prophets since the world began, and assured by God’s promises of mercy and truth.

The Church begins her day and year, her course of salvation, by this turning of darkness into light, and the shadow of death into the morning. She *does not reckon according to the sun in the visible heavens, but according to the true Sun of Right-*

eousness, of whom the visible sun is an image. She now calls loudly upon her children to lay hold of the morning and rise early: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The time of ignorance is past, and the light is come, leaving those altogether without excuse who walk on still in darkness, in error, and vice. For with the first Advent of Christ, His second Advent also is proclaimed, in which He will judge the world in righteousness, and give every man according as his work shall be.

The *Collect* which is first said on this day, and is continued throughout Advent, teaches us fully the meaning of this season. For the prayers in our Prayer-Book are both *doctrinal* and *devotional*; they teach us what we are to believe, and warm our affections to receive it. This *Collect* implores the grace of God, which, by Christ's coming, hath appeared to all men, teaching and enabling us to shake off the works of darkness, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to put on the Christian soldier's dress for the spiritual warfare—his armour of light; that so, striving against sin and all the powers of darkness, we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who shall come again in heavenly glory, to raise the dead and judge the world. We must follow Him now in the steps of His great humility, *that we may then awake from the sleep of death and the grave, to see His face with joy, and for ever live with Him in bliss immortal.*

The **Epistle** moves us to follow such a course in our present mortal life.

The **Gospel** shews us our Lord's humility, when He rode lowly upon an ass, approaching to His deepest humiliation in a death of pain and shame upon the cross; and it contains also a type of His second Advent, when He shall descend from Heaven with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God—a voice which shall call together all the living who then shall be upon the earth, changing them in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and shall awaken the many, even the whole mass of them that sleep in the dust, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, to die the ever-dying death.

This shall be the end of that wonderful dispensation by which the Son of God took our nature upon Him, and came down to our low estate, that He might raise us up from the dust to life eternal. His glorious Majesty descended to the lowest humility. At His birth, the Angels in Heaven rejoiced with glory, whilst He upon earth, amidst the darkness of night, lay in a manger as a helpless infant.

The Church at this time reminds us of the seeming meanness of our Lord's first Advent, and the greatness of His second Advent. And so these two are joined together by the prophets of old: they speak of His lowly coming in the flesh and of His glorious coming to judgment; and they call the whole time of the Christian dispensation by the name of the "last days," after which *there will be nothing more but the endless state of eternity.*

The proper **Lessons** for this season and on to the approach of Lent, are taken out of the great prophecy of Isaiah, which was passed over in the calendar and course of Sunday Lessons, in order that it might be kept for this time. The glad tidings of salvation through Christ are so clearly announced by this prophet, that he is especially called the Evangelical Prophet. The **Morning Lesson** for this day agrees with the **Epistle**, by its awakening calls and admonitions, powerfully warning us not to rest in professing our religion without practising it.

Isaiah, like our Lord's forerunner, St. John the Baptist, begins by preaching repentance. He points out, also, the Evangelical Baptism, with its blessed effects and binding conditions of salvation.

"Wash ye, make you clean!" Nothing can do this but the Blood of Christ, Who for the forgiveness of sins did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood, and thus opened to His Church a fountain for sin and for uncleanness. "Put away," by this baptismal cleansing, "the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes." By repentance "cease to do evil." "Learn," by the doctrines of Faith, "to do well," which is holy obedience. These,—Repentance, Faith, and Obedience,—are the three parts of the Baptismal Vow.

But if we neglect so great salvation, the prophet, like the Baptist, forewarns us of the fiery indignation which will avenge the cause of slighted mercy in that dreadful day, when the wicked *and their works* shall burn together, and none *shall quench them.*

The **Evening Lesson** very well agrees with the subject of the **Gospel**: it announces the state of the Church, the mount of the Lord's House, Christ's kingdom, when He has called all nations into it. Then Jews and Gentiles, joined together in accord, shall cast away their weapons of war and all the works of darkness, and under the Prince of peace shall walk together in the light of the Lord.

But only the humble can be His true servants. His heavenly kingdom is made up of the poor in spirit. This kingdom humbles the haughtiness of man; its enemies are the proud and lofty, who will be destroyed as rebels if they do not submit as subjects, and at the Great King's second Advent will tremble for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Second Sunday in Advent.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."—*Isaiah xxxiii. 17.*

THOUGH Moses was not permitted to enter the land of promise, he was vouchsafed a sight of it from a distance. We too, though as yet we are not admitted to heavenly glory, yet are given to see much, in preparation for seeing more. Christ dwells among us in His Church, really, though invisibly, and through its Ordinances fulfils towards us, in a true and sufficient sense, the promise of the text. We are even now permitted to "see the King in His beauty;" to "behold the

land that is very far off." The words of the prophet relate to our present state as well as to the state of saints hereafter. Of the future glory it is said by St. John, "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii. 4). And of the present, Isaiah himself speaks in passages which may be taken in explanation of the text: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;" and again, "They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (Is. xl. 5; xxxv. 2).

We do not see God face to face under the Gospel; but still, for all that, "we know in part," we see, though it be "through a glass darkly;" which is far more than any but Christians are enabled to do. Baptism, by which we become Christians, is an illumination; and Christ, Who is the object of our worship, is withal a light to worship by.

If, then, we think of God as present, we must feel a reverence and fear of His presence. If we saw God, we should fear; but why should we fear? Would it be merely because we saw God, or because we knew that God was present? If we shut our eyes, we should still fear, when our eyes had conveyed to us this solemn truth; to *have* seen would be enough. If so, does it not follow at once, that if men do not fear, it is because they do not act as they would act if they saw Him; that is, they do not feel that He is present? Is it not quite certain that men would not use *Almighty* God's name so freely, if they thought *He was really* in hearing, nay, close beside them *when they spoke*? If any one believes God to be

present, he will shrink from addressing Him familiarly, or using unreal words, or deciding on his own judgment what God's will is, or addressing Him in a familiar posture of body.

There is a sense, and a true sense, in which the *invisible* presence of God is more awful and overpowering than if we saw it. And so, again, the presence of Christ, now that it is invisible, brings with it high and mysterious feelings, such as nothing else can inspire. When He was going away, He said to His disciples, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." Yet He had at another time said, "The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast in those days." They were to joy because Christ was come, and yet weep because He was away. Such is the state of mind which they are in, who believe that the Son of God is here, yet away; is at the right hand of God, yet in His very flesh and blood among us; is present, though invisible. It is a feeling of awe, wonder, and praise, which cannot be more suitably expressed than by the Scripture word *fear*; or by holy Job's words, though he spoke in grief, and not as being possessed of a blessing: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider, I am afraid of Him" (Job xxiii. 8, 9, 15).

Godly fear must be a duty, if to live as in God's sight is a duty,—must be a privilege of the Gospel.

if the spiritual sight of "the King in His beauty" be one of its privileges. Fear follows from faith necessarily, as would be plain, even though there were not a text in the Bible saying so. But, in fact, Scripture abounds in precepts to fear God. Such are the words of the wise man: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. i. 7). Such, again, is the third commandment, in which we are solemnly bidden not to take God's name in vain. Such the declaration of the prophet Habakkuk, who, beginning by declaring, "The just shall live by his faith," ends by saying, "The Lord is in His holy temple; let the whole earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. ii. 4, 20). Such is St. Paul's, who, in like manner, after having discoursed at length upon faith as "the realising of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," adds, "let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 28). Such St. Luke's account of the Church militant on earth, that "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, it was multiplied" (Acts ix. 31). Such St. John's account of the Church triumphant in Heaven, "Who shall not fear Thee," they say, "O Lord, and glorify Thy name; for Thou art holy" (Rev. xv. 4). Such the feeling recorded of the three Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, who, when they heard God's voice, "fell on their face, and were sore afraid" (Matt. xvii. 6).

And now, if this be so, can any thing be clearer than that the want of fear is nothing else but want of faith? We have no fear when we exer-

cise no *acts* of faith. What, you will ask, are acts of faith? Such as these: to come often to prayer, is an act of faith; to kneel down instead of sitting, is an act of faith; to strive to attend to your prayers, is an act of faith; to behave in God's house otherwise than you would in a common room, is an act of faith; to come often to the most Holy Sacrament, is an act of faith; and to be still and reverent during that sacred service, is an act of faith. These are all acts of faith, because they all are acts such as we should perform, if we saw and heard Him who *is* present, though with our bodily eyes we see and hear Him *not*. But, "blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed:" for, be sure, if we thus act, we shall, through God's grace, be gradually endued with the spirit of His holy fear. We shall in time, in our mode of talking and acting, in our religious services and our daily conduct, manifest, not with constraint and effort, but readily and naturally, that we fear Him while we love Him.

But oh! frail hearts, and spirits dark!
The seasons' flight unwarn'd we mark;
And miss the Judge behind the door,¹
For all the light of sacred lore.

Yet is He there; beneath our eaves
Each sound His wakeful ear receives.
Hush, idle words, and thoughts of ill,
Your Lord is listening; peace, be still.

Christ watches by a Christian's hearth,
Be silent, "vain deluding mirth,"
Till in thine altered voice be known
Somewhat of resignation's tone.

¹ See St. James v. 9.

*Services for the Second Sunday in Advent.***Morning Lesson**, Isaiah v.**Evening Lesson**, Isaiah xxiv.**Epistle**, Romans xv. 4.**Gospel**, St. Luke xxi. 25.

The Collect.—Blessed Lord, Who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and comfort of Thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The general **Collect**, which is read every day throughout this season, shews the design, and movingly excites the devotion of it. The time of *Advent*, or *coming*, is dedicated to the belief and contemplation of the twofold coming of Christ. There are two outward Advents of our Lord; the first in great humility, the second in glorious majesty, attended with triumph to the good, and terror to the bad.

In the mean time, while the accepted time, the day of salvation, lasteth, if we hope to reap the blessings of His first, and be prepared to lift up our heads with joy at His last coming, we must endeavour carefully to secure His intermediate, invisible, spiritual Advent, His coming and dwelling in our hearts by faith, hope, and love. After He had come in great humility, He was exalted *in glory to the highest heavens*; yet He is still *ever present with His Church by His Spirit*, to

the end of time, according to His own unfailing promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

This invisible Advent He also promised to His disciples when they sorrowed at His leaving them; for He said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." Again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will *come* unto him (by the Divine Comforter, three being one), and make our abode with him" (John xiv).

If we would dwell in Christ, and invite Christ to dwell in us, we must dwell together in unity; and being thus rooted and grounded in love, Christ shall make His Advent into our hearts. Division, schism, or splitting into parties, is a sure symptom of a deluding spirit: "These are they who separate themselves (says the Holy Ghost by St. Jude), sensual, having not the Spirit." We must take heed to the true and steady light of God's sure Word, which is a lamp to our path in the dark-night of this life. The Church is the candlestick upon which this light is placed—the pillar it is and ground of the truth. The services of this season direct us to the proper means for securing our Lord's presence in our hearts, by His Word, the Holy Scriptures, written for our learning, and the Sacraments of His Divine institution.

The **Collect** for this day adores His Name for the inestimable blessing of the Holy Scriptures; and prays for grace that we may so devoutly hear and learn, and treasure in our hearts His Holy Word, that we may know, and keep, and do it

and so our Lord will come to us and abide with us, giving us the hope of everlasting life; for He is the life of our souls.

In the **Epistle** we hear of our Saviour coming as a light to lighten the Gentiles, that we may think on the blessings brought by His first Advent to us, who before lay in darkness and the shadow of death.

In the **Gospel** we hear of the terrors of His second Advent, when He will put an end to the world, and the heavens and the earth which we now see will be burnt up with fire. We learn from our Lord's words, that the destruction of Jerusalem is a figure or type of the terrors of the last day. Now the ruin of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, was the punishment of their obstinate refusal to listen to our Lord's gracious offers of mercy, and of their persisting in wilful sin when He called them so often to repentance.

We hear in the **First Morning Lesson** of all that the Almighty did for His chosen vineyard, the house of Israel, and how the Israelites still hardened their hearts. The parable of the vineyard in the fifth chapter of Isaiah was repeated by our Lord, when He Himself stood amongst His gainsaying people (Matt. xxi. 33, &c.).

In the **First Evening Lesson** also, we are called to take warning by the fate of the Jews, that we may give diligent heed to our own ways, and not fall into destruction by our unbelief and disobedience. Utter ruin fell upon the Jews, *because they would not hearken to their Saviour, and would not take heed whilst their day of sal-*

vation lasted. The Holy Ghost has foretold by St. Peter that in the last days scoffers shall say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Our Lord, meanwhile, long-suffering, waits that He may be gracious, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. Merciful Lord, we believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge; we therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood. Make us then to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

Third Sunday in Advent.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off,"—*Isaiah* xxxiii. 17.

THE Prophet tells us that, under the Gospel covenant, God's servant will have the privilege of seeing those heavenly sights which were but shadowed out in the Law. Before Christ came was the time of shadows; but when He came, He brought truth as well as grace; and as He who *is the Truth* has come to us, so does He in return *require that we should be true and sincere in*

our dealings with Him. To be true and sincere, is really to see with our minds those great wonders which He has wrought in order that we might see them. When God opened the eyes of the ass on which Balaam rode, she saw the angel, and acted upon the sight. When He opened the eyes of the young man, Elisha's servant, he, too, saw the chariots and horses of fire, and took comfort. And, in a like manner, Christians are now under the protection of a Divine Presence, and that more wonderful than any which was vouchsafed of old time. God revealed Himself visibly to Jacob, to Job, to Moses, to Joshua, and to Isaiah: to us He reveals Himself not visibly, but more wonderfully and truly—upon our faith, and for that very reason more truly; for faith is the special means of gaining spiritual blessings. Hence St. Paul prays for the Ephesians, "that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17), and that "the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened" (Eph. i. 18). And St. John declares that "the Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John v. 20).

We are no longer, then, in the land of shadows: we have the true Saviour set before us, the true reward, and the true means of renewing our souls. We know the true state of the soul by nature and by grace, the evil of sin, the consequences of sinning, the way of pleasing God, and the motives to *act upon*. God has revealed Himself clearly to *us*; *He has* "destroyed the face of the covering *cast over all* people, and the veil that is spread

over all nations" (Isaiah xxv. 7). "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8). And therefore, I say, He calls upon us in turn to "walk in the light, as He is in the light." The Pharisees might have this excuse in their hypocrisy, that the plain truth had not been revealed to them. We have not even this poor reason for insincerity. We have no opportunity of mistaking one thing for another; the promise is expressly made to us, that "our teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but our eyes shall see our teachers" (Isaiah xxx. 20); that "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim;" that every thing shall be called by its right name; that "the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful" (Isaiah xxxii. 3, 5); in a word, as the text speaks, that "our eyes shall see the King in His beauty; we shall behold the land that is very far off." Our professions, our creed, our prayers, our dealings, our conversation, our arguments, our teaching, must henceforth be sincere, or, to use an expressive word, must be *real*. What St. Paul says of himself and his fellow-labourers, that they were true because Christ is true, applies to all Christians: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards. . . . The thing that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the pro-

mises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 12-20).

And yet, it need scarcely be said, nothing is so rare as honesty and singleness of mind; so much so, that a person who is really honest, is already perfect. Insincerity was an evil which sprung up within the Church from the first; Ananias and Simon were not open opposers of the Apostles, but false brethren. And, as foreseeing what was to be, our Saviour is remarkable in His ministry for nothing more than the earnestness with which He warned those who came to Him, against taking up religion lightly, or making promises which they were likely to break.

Thus He, "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9), "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), said to the young ruler, who lightly called Him "Good Master," "Why callest thou me good?" as bidding him weigh his words; and then abruptly told him, "One thing thou lackest" (Mark x. 17-21). When a certain man professed that he would follow Him whithersoever He went, He did not respond to him, but said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20). When St. Peter said, with all his heart, in the name of himself and his brethren, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," He answered, pointedly, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (*John vi. 68-70.*) As if He said, "Answer for *yourself.*" When the two Apostles professed their

desire to cast their lot with Him, He asked whether they could "drink of His cup, and be baptised with His baptism" (Matt. xx. 22). And when "there went great multitudes with Him," He turned and said, that unless a man hated relations, friends, and self, he could not be His disciple. And then He proceeded to warn all men to "count the cost" ere they followed Him (Luke xiv. 25-28.) Such is the merciful severity with which He repels us, that He may gain us more truly. And what He thinks of those who, after coming to Him, fall back into a hollow and hypocritical profession, we learn from His language towards the Laodiceans: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will cast thee out of my mouth" (Rev. iii. 15, 16).

We have a striking instance of the same conduct on the part of that ancient saint who prefigured our Lord in name and office—Joshua, the captain of the chosen people in entering Canaan. When they had at length taken possession of that land which Moses and their fathers had seen "very far off," they said to him, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, and serve other gods. We will serve the Lord, for He is our God." He made answer, "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Josh. xxiv. 16-19). Not as if he would hinder them from obeying, but to sober them in professing. *How does his answer remind us of St. Paul's*

still more awful words, about the impossibility of renewal after utterly falling away !

And what is said of profession of *discipleship* applies undoubtedly in its degree to *all* profession. To make professions is to play with edge-tools, unless we attend to what we are saying. Words have a meaning, whether we mean that meaning or not ; and they are imputed to us in their real meaning, when our not meaning it is our own fault. He who takes God's name in vain is not counted guiltless because he means nothing by it—he cannot frame a language for himself ; and they who make professions, of whatever kind, are heard in the sense of those professions, and are not excused because they themselves attach no sense to them. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. xii. 37).

Not that profession is always wrong. It takes a long time really to feel and understand things as they are ; we learn to do so only gradually. Profession beyond our feelings is only a fault when we might help it ; when either we speak when we need not speak, or do not feel when we might have felt. Hard insensible hearts, ready and thoughtless talkers, are they whose unreality is a sin ; it is the sin of every one of us, in proportion as our hearts are cold, or our tongues excessive. But the mere fact of our saying more than we feel, is not necessarily sinful. St. Peter did not rise up to the full meaning of his *profession*, “Thou art the Christ ;” yet he was pronounced *blessed*. St. James and St. John said,

"We are able," without clear understanding, yet without offence. We ever promise greater things than we master, and we wait on God to enable us to perform them. Our promising involves a prayer for light and strength. And so, again, we all say the Creed; but who comprehends it fully? All we can hope is, that we are in the way to understand it; that we partly understand it; that we desire, pray, and strive to understand it more and more. Our Creed becomes a sort of prayer. Persons are guilty of being unreal in their way of speaking, not when they say more than they feel, but when they say things different from what they feel.

Be in earnest, and you will speak of religion where, and when, and how you should; aim at things, and your words will be right without aiming. There are ten thousand ways of looking at this world, but only one right one. Poor men and rich men, governors and governed, prosperous and discontented, learned and unlearned, each has his own way of looking at the things which come before him, and each has a wrong way. There is but one right way; it is the way God looks at the world. Aim at seeing it in God's way. Aim at seeing things as God sees them. Aim at forming judgments about persons, events, ranks, fortunes, changes, objects, such as God forms. Aim at looking at this life as God looks at it. Aim at looking at the life to come, and the world unseen, as God does. Aim at seeing "the King in His beauty."

It is not an easy thing to learn that new language which Christ has brought us. He has interpreted all things for us in a new way; He has

brought us a religion which sheds a new light on all that happens. Try to learn this language. Do not get it by rote, or speak it as a thing of course. Try to understand what you say. Time is short, eternity is long ; God is great, man is weak ; he stands between heaven and hell ; Christ is his Saviour ; Christ has suffered for him ; the Holy Ghost sanctifies him ; repentance purifies him ; faith justifies, works save. These are solemn truths, which need not be actually spoken, except in the way of creed or of teaching ; but which must be laid up in the heart. That a thing is true, is no reason that it should be said, but that it should be done ; that it should be acted upon ; that it should be made our own inwardly.

Let us aim at meaning what we say, and saying what we mean ; let us aim at knowing when we understand a truth, and when we do not. When we do not, let us take it on faith, and let us profess to do so. Let us receive the truth in reverence, and pray God to give us a good will, and divine light, and spiritual strength, that it may bear fruit within us.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."—
Rev. xxii. 20.

FEAR NOT : for He hath sworn :

Faithful and true His Name :

The glorious hours are onward borne ;

'Tis lit, th' immortal flame ;

It glows *around* thee : kneel, and strive, and win,
 Daily, one living ray—'twill brighter glow *within*.

YET FEAR : the time is brief ;

The Holy One is near ;

And, like a spent and withered leaf

In autumn twilight drear,

Faster each hour, on Time's unslackening gale,
The dreaming world drives on, to where all vision fail.

Surely the time is short :

Endless the task and art
To brighten for the ethereal court
A soil'd, earth-drudging heart.
But He, the dread Proclaimer of that hour,
Is pledged to thee in love, as to thy foes in power.

His shoulders bear the key :

He opens—who can close ?
Closes—and who dare open ? He
Thy soul's misgiving knows.
If He come quick, the mightier sure will prove
His Spirit in each heart that timely strives to love.

Then haste Thee, Lord ! Come down,

Take Thy great power and reign !
But frame Thee first a perfect crown
Of spirits freed from stain,—
Souls mortal once, now match'd for evermore
With the immortal gems that form'd Thy wreath before.

Who in Thy portal wait,

Free of that glorious throng,
Wondering, review their trial-state,
The life that erst seem'd long ;
Wondering at His deep love, Who purg'd so base
And earthly mould so soon for th' undefiled place.

Services for the Third Sunday in Advent.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah xxv.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah xxvi.

Epistle, 1 Cor. iv. 1.

Gospel, St. Matt. xi. 2.

The Collect.—O Lord Jesus Christ, Who at
Thy first coming didst send Thy messenger to

prepare Thy way before Thee; grant that the ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The service of this solemn season of Advent much resembles the ministry of St. John the Baptist, preparing the way for Christ's appearance—the bright morning-star heralding the rising Sun. And accordingly the office of the holy Baptist is held out to us in this day's *Collect*, as it is also in the *Gospel* for this and for the following Sunday.

In this day's *Collect* mention is made of St. John the Baptist, who prepared the way before our Lord on His first coming; and we are there taught to pray for those whose office it now is to prepare the way for our Lord's second coming. These are our Clergy, the ministers and stewards of His mysteries, who are ordained to minister to Christ's people, and to give out to them, like faithful stewards, the mysteries of their Lord.

Through Christ's appointed ministers, we, His people, receive all the means of grace necessary to prepare us for His coming in glorious majesty.

We are bound to pray for them, as we do in the prayer for the Church militant—"that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth the *true and lively Word*" of God, "and rightly and *duly administer*" His "holy Sacraments."

We pray the rather for our Clergy at this time, as the Church has made this one of her Ember Seasons. The Ember Weeks are sometimes called the Fasts of the Four Times, consecrating to God the four seasons of the year—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Their purpose is, to implore, by prayer and fasting, the blessing and direction of God for the ministers about to be ordained; they are the four weeks going before four separate Sundays in the year, on which the Bishops ordain Priests and Deacons to the ministry. In the prayers appointed to be used during the Ember Weeks, we ask, that the Bishops may choose wisely, and that those whom they choose may serve faithfully. Christ, both God and man, to Whom all power is given in heaven and earth, is the fountain of our ministers' authority; and to be His ministers and stewards, they must have His commission; for no man can take that high honour to himself. And now that Christ is raised to the highest heavens, He gives commission and authority by descent from those to whom first He gave it—His holy Apostles. He gave it to them first, that by them it might be handed on to their successors, and continued to the end of time; He promised to be with His commission from age to age, to the end of the world, when He shall come to judgment.

In compliance with the Baptist's loud and awakening call, resounded by our Church in this solemn season of Advent, we have all great need to search and try our ways, and truly amend our *lives, that our ministers may not strive in vain to turn "the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom*

of the just." Of His coming to be our Judge, the **Epistle** forewarns both clergy and people; and shews us the humble fear of the great Apostle, who, although his conscience did not accuse him, yet dared not assure himself that he would be acquitted at the last day, but humbly waited the sentence of his Judge. So, while we try our hearts, and judge not those who are set over us, but *ourselves*, we must consider that our hearts are now open to Him, who one day will bring their secrets to light; and we must pray in the words of David: "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix.).

The **Lessons** for the day are fitted to awaken us from the sleep of sin and sloth, that we may lead a life of holiness. We hear of the conquest of Christ over the great enemy and his proud Babylon, the city of confusion; which is a figure of the wicked world. We hear of the raising up of the Church in its stead; the kingdom of peace and righteousness, and the final conquest of sin and death by the resurrection of the dead. We may plainly trace, in the words of the prophet, the dust raised from the grave, and the happy souls called out of their intermediate chambers of rest and joy to enter their gloriously raised bodies. Our Lord Himself said afterwards, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John xi.). And *here, by the Prophet, He says, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body (the first*

fruits of the resurrection) shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah xxvi. 19). In that great day of terror and triumph, when the Lord shall descend from the right hand of the Father, surrounded with innumerable angels, and seated on His throne of judgment, He shall absolve the righteous, who in that day shall find the mercy for which they hoped and prayed; and condemn the wicked, who would not, by forsaking sin, accept of mercy while it was to be found, and now must fall under the stroke of eternal judgment.

The Psalmist says, in agreement with the song of this *Evening's Lesson*, "My song shall be of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing" (Ps. ci.). And every one who reflects on the unchangeable course of mercy and judgment, and resolves to fly from the throne of judgment to the seat of mercy, will add with the Psalmist, "O, let me have understanding in the way of godliness!"—that way which has God for its beginning, and God for its end, in endless bliss.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."—
Phil. iv. 4.

IN other parts of Scripture the prospect of Christ's coming is made a reason for solemn fear and awe, and a call for watching and prayer; but in the *verses* connected with the text, a distinct view of

the Christian character is set before us, and distinct duties urged on us. "The Lord is at hand,"—and what then? Why, if so, we must "rejoice in the Lord;" we must be examples of "moderation;" we must be "careful for nothing;" we must seek from God's bounty, and not from man, whatever we need; we must abound in "thanksgiving;" and we must cherish, or rather we must pray for, and we shall receive from above, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," to "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

This shews us that the thought of Christ's coming not only leads to fear, but to a calm and cheerful frame of mind. And it is the more remarkable that St. Paul should have given us this view of what a Christian should be, because he was himself a man of toil, a man combating with powers unseen, and a spectacle for men and angels. We know that St. Paul could do great things; could suffer and confess, could be high and could be low; and yet he who "laboured more abundantly than all" his brethren, is also a pattern of simplicity, meekness, cheerfulness, thankfulness, and serenity of mind. These tempers especially belonged to St. Paul, and are much insisted on in his Epistles. For instance, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. . . . Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. xii. 16-18). He enjoins, *that "the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged*

women likewise, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands;” and “young men to be sober-minded.” And it is remarkable that he ends this exhortation with urging the same reason as is given in the verse after the text: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. ii. 2-13). In like manner he says, that Christ’s ministers must shew “uncorruptness in doctrine, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned;” that they must be “blameless, not self-willed, not soon angry . . . Lovers of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (Tit. i. 7, 8). It is observable, too, that this was foretold as the character of Gospel-times, by the prophet Isaiah: “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places” (Is. xxxii. 17, 18).

Now, then, let us consider more particularly what is this state of mind, and what the grounds of it. These seem to be as follow: the Lord is at hand; this is not your rest—this is not your dwelling-place. Act, then, as persons who are in a dwelling not their own; who are not in their own house; who have not their own goods and furniture about them; who accordingly make shift and *put up with* any thing that comes to hand, and *do not make a point of things being the best of*

their kind. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." What matters it what we eat, what we drink, how we are clothed, where we lodge, what is thought of us, what becomes of us, since we are not at home? It is felt every day, as regards this world, that when we leave home for a while, we are unsettled. This, then, is the kind of feeling which a belief in Christ's coming may create within us. It is not worth while establishing ourselves here; it is not worth while spending time and thoughts on such an object. We shall hardly have got settled when we shall have to move. St. Paul says, "Be careful for nothing;" and St. Peter, "casting all your care upon Him" (1 Pet. v. 7); or as He Himself, "Take no thought," or care, "for the morrow, for the morrow will take care for the things of itself" (Matt. vi. 34). This, of course, is the state of mind which directly follows on the belief that "the Lord is at hand." Who would care for any loss or gain to-day, if he knew for certain that Christ would shew Himself to-morrow? No one. Well, then, the true Christian feels as he would feel, did he know for certain that Christ would be here to-morrow. For he knows for certain that at least Christ will come to him when he dies; and faith makes the time of his death present, just as if that distant day, if it *be* distant, were past and over. One time or another Christ will come for certain; and when He once *has* come, it matters not what length of time there was before He came; however long that period may be, it has an end. *Judgment is coming, whether it comes sooner or later, and the Christian realises that it is coming;*

that is, time does not enter into his calculation, or interfere with his view of things. When men expect to live out their plans and projects, then they care for them; when they know they will come to nought, they give them over, or become indifferent to them.

So, again, it is with all forebodings, anxieties, mortifications, griefs, resentments of this world. "The time is short." It has sometimes been well suggested, as a mode of calming the mind when set upon an object, or much vexed or angered at some occurrence, what will you feel about all this a year hence? It is very plain that matters which agitate us most extremely now, will then interest us not at all; that objects about which we have intense hope and fear now, will then be to us nothing more than things which happen at the other end of the earth. So will it be with all human hopes, fears, pleasures, pains, jealousies, disappointments, successes, when the last day is come. They will have no life in them; they will be as the faded flowers of a bouquet, which do but mock us. Or, when we lie on the bed of death, what will it avail us to have been rich, or great, or fortunate, or honoured, or influential? All things will then be vanity. Well, what this world will be understood by all to be then, such is it felt to be by the Christian now. He looks at things as he then will look at them, with an uninterested and dispassionate eye, and is neither pained much nor pleased much at the accidents of life, because they are accidents.

Peace is part of the same temper also. "The peace of God," says the Apostle, "which passeth

all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." There are many things in the Gospel to alarm us, many to transport us; but the end and issue of all these is *peace*. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." The Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not, like some well in a retired and shady place, difficult of access. What he is when left to himself and to his God, that is his true life. He can bear himself; he can, as it were, joy in himself, for it is the grace of God within him, it is the presence of the Eternal Comforter, in which he joys. He can bear, he finds it pleasant, to be with himself at all times, "never less alone than when alone." He can lay his head on his pillow at night, and own in God's sight, with overflowing heart, that he wants nothing; that he "is full and abounds;" that God has been all things to him, and that nothing is not his which God could give him. More thankfulness, more holiness, more of heaven he needs indeed, but the thought that he can have more is not a thought of trouble but of joy. It does not interfere with his peace to know that he may grow nearer God. Such is the Christian's peace, when with a single heart and the cross in his eye, he addresses and commends himself to Him with whom the night is as clear as the day. St. Paul says, the "peace of God shall *keep* our hearts and minds." By "keep" is meant "guard" or "garrison" our hearts, so as to keep out enemies. And he says "our hearts and minds," in contrast to what the world sees of us. Many hard things may be said of the Christian, and done against

him; but he has a secret preservative or charm, and minds them not.

These are some few thoughts on the character of mind which becomes the followers of Him who was once "born of a pure virgin," and who bids them, as "new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby." The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming; has no pretence, no affectation, no ambition, no singularity, because he has neither hope nor fear about this world.

"Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."—*Isaiah xxv. 4.*

A mighty river, flowing
Through dry and herbless sand;
A rock, its shadow throwing
Across a weary land;
Such, blessed Saviour, now,
While in noon-day heat we toil,
Through life's parch'd and barren soil,
Such to Thy Church art Thou.

A covert from the beating
Of stormy wind and rain,
The way-worn pilgrim greeting
On some bleak wintry plain;
Such is Thy Cross's shade:
There, while round God's judgments sweep,
Calm, as in health's sweetest sleep,
Thy faithful ones are laid.

*Services for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.***Morning Lesson**, Isaiah xxx.**Evening Lesson**, Isaiah xxxii.**Epistle**, Phil. iv. 4.**Gospel**, St. John i. 19.

Collect.—O Lord, raise up (we pray Thee) Thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, Thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of Thy Son our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Advent, that is, the coming of Christ, has been the desire of mankind ever since Adam was for his sin banished from paradise. All nature felt the bruise of Adam's fall; the whole creation lay groaning and travailing in pain after sin had brought death into the world. The best of men felt the sore disease, and groaned within themselves for redemption (Rom. viii.). Miserable creatures desired a merciful deliverance; but justice stood in the way of mercy, and must have full satisfaction made to it, before mercy could take place. The whole creation could not make atonement to infinite justice, for created things could not make atonement to their Creator.

We may see our desperate case set forth in that chapter of the prophet Isaiah which is appointed by the Calendar of Daily Lessons to be read on the morning of the day before Christmas. "Th

Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation to Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him" (Is. lix.).

That righteousness and peace might embrace, that infinite justice and infinite mercy might be reconciled, the Lord Himself took upon Him our nature; He became *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*, God and man in one person; man to suffer, and God to satisfy, and to make that suffering of such worth that it could atone for the sins of the whole world. The first promise of this Divine Redeemer and His redemption was made in paradise, when it was said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" and from that time till He came to fulfil the promise, His coming was the desire of all the faithful. The words of Isaiah spoke the wish of the whole earth when he said, "O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!" (Is. lxiv. 1.)

At length, through the tender mercy of our God, the Dayspring from on high visited this dark world. The welcome messenger sent before the Lamb of God, prepared His way, and gave knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. He did this by preaching repentance. He taught the great truth that repentance must go before remission of sins; for the Son of God came not to save His people *in* but *from* their sins, to deliver them not only from the punishment, but from the practice of sin. So Isaiah speaks in the chapter which is read on the

day before our Lord's Nativity. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Is. lix.). So ends the volume of the Old Testament with the words of the prophet Malachi: "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2). That we may so use His first coming as to escape the curse and obtain the blessing of His second coming, the services of this last Sunday are appointed.

The **Collect** speaks in a penitential strain, lamenting our slow progress in that race of righteousness which must be run before we can reach its happy end. And, therefore, we earnestly pray for our Lord's spiritual coming, that He would send His grace to prepare our hearts and come among us, pardoning what is past and strengthening us to run our race for the future.

The **Epistle** warns us that our Lord is at hand, and bids us rejoice for the glad tidings of His approach. The most sorrowful exercises of religion sow the seeds of sincere joy. Yet our joy must still be tempered with holy fear, and the practice of moderation or meekness. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." In the mind which is well furnished with Christian virtues, there will be no room for carking care; our devout recourse to God will keep the heart in peace and repose in Christ, and raised far above the changes and vexations of the world. And therefore it follows, "Be careful for nothing."

The holy Baptist, in the **Gospel**, again calls us to Christ, the only object of true eternal joy. St.

John's voice in the wilderness can best be heard in quietness of mind; and in order to hear it we must keep our hearts clear from worldly tumult, even if our hands are busy in the station of life to which God has called us. It is part of man's duty to labour, and need not hinder us from standing with lamps burning and newly-trimmed, ready to meet the heavenly Bridegroom, that He may save us from sin and sorrow.

The threatenings and warnings of the proper **Lessons** are meant to withdraw us from false trust in this sinful world, which will be to us what Egypt was to the Israelites; such trust is the worst bondage, and our true strength is in our Rock, who never can be moved; our King, whose reign is righteousness; our hiding-place from the tempest; our shelter and refreshment in this weary land.

Thus should we refer to our own spiritual improvement the history of God's people of old; for the things which happened to them are written, says St. Paul, for examples and warnings, and for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.



THE
SEASON OF CHRISTMAS.

First Sunday after Christmas.

ET us at this season approach Him with awe and love, in whom resides all perfection, and from whom we are allowed to gain it. Let us come to the Sanctifier to be sanctified. Let us come to Him to learn our duty, and to receive grace to do it. At other seasons of the year we are reminded of watching, toiling, and suffering; but at this season we are reminded simply of God's gifts towards us sinners; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." We are reminded that we can do nothing and that God does every thing. This is especially the season of grace. We come to see and to experience God's mercies. We come before Him as the helpless beings, during His ministry, who were brought on beds and couches for a cure. We come to be made whole. We come as little children to be fed and taught, as "new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2).

This is a time for innocence, and purity, and gentleness, and mildness, and contentment, and

peace. It is a time in which the whole Church seems decked in white, in her baptismal robe, in the bright and glistening raiment which she wears upon the holy mount. Christ comes at other times with garments died in blood; but now He comes to us in all serenity and peace, and He bids us rejoice in Him, and to love one another. This is not a time for gloom, or jealousy, or care, or indulgence, or excess, or license; not for "rioting and drunkenness," not for "chambering and wantonness," not for "strife and envying," as says the Apostle (Rom. xiii. 13); but for putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, "who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."

May each Christmas, as it comes, find us more and more like Him who as at this time became a little child for our sake,—more simple-minded, more humble, more holy, more affectionate, more resigned, more happy, more full of God.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God."—*Luke* ii. 13.

What sudden blaze of song
Spreads o'er th' expanse of heaven?
In waves of light it thrills along,
Th' angelic signal given—
"Glory to God!" from yonder central fire
Flows out th' echoing lay beyond the starry quire.

Like circles widening round
Upon a clear blue river,
Orb after orb, the wondrous sound
Is echoed on for ever:
"Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And love towards men of love—salvation and release."

Yet stay, before thou dare
 To join the festal throng ;
 Listen and mark what gentle air
 First stirr'd the tide of song ;
 'Tis not, " the Saviour born in David's home ;
 To whom for power and health obedient worlds should
 come : "

'Tis not " the Christ the Lord : "
 With fix'd adoring look
 The choir of angels caught the word,
 Nor yet their silence broke :
 But when they heard the sign where Christ should be,
 In sudden light they shone and heavenly harmony.

Wrapp'd in His swaddling bands,
 And in His manger laid,
 The Hope and Glory of all lands
 Is come to the world's aid :
 No peaceful home upon His cradle smil'd,
 Guests rudely went and came, where slept the royal
 Child.

But where Thou dwellest, Lord,
 No other thought should be ;
 Once duly welcom'd and ador'd,
 How should I part with Thee ?
 Bethlehem must lose Thee soon, but Thou wilt grace
 The single heart to be Thy sure abiding-place.

Services for the Sunday after Christmas Day.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah xxxvii.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah xxxviii.

Epistle, Galatians iv. 1.

Gospel, St. Matthew i. 18.

The Collect.—Almighty God, who hast given

us Thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin ; grant that we being regenerate, and made Thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit ; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Spirit, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The morning-star is eclipsed by the rising sun, and Advent has now given place to Christmas, the season of glad tidings, from whence spring all our joys. The Church has provided a separate service for the Sunday that may sometimes fall within the *octave* of Christmas (the eight days after Christmas), to prolong the joy of the happy festival, and its glad tidings. She repeats on this Sunday the *Collect* for Christmas Day, praying still to receive the blessings and benefits of our Saviour's birth. We acknowledge the love of the Father who sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and we ask for the saving grace which His birth procured for us ; that having been by the Holy Ghost regenerated in baptism, we may be renewed day by day through the same Holy Spirit, we may receive nourishment to our souls through that other sacrament ; and that by these means of grace, we may attain to that high glory which our Saviour's humiliation purchased for us.

The *Epistle* enlarges upon these great blessings ; it fixes our thoughts upon the wonderful *love of the Eternal Father*, who sent forth His *co-eternal Son*, made of a woman according to

the flesh, that He might, by taking upon Him our nature, become our ransom, and translate us from the bondage of corruption to the high privilege of being God's adopted children, sealed with His Spirit, and heirs through and with Christ of His eternal glory.

The *Gospel* conveys the *glad tidings* of our Redeemer's miraculous Incarnation and Birth of the highly favoured and blessed Virgin Mary. He was born of her substance, and made very man, subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh, yet, at the same time, He was *Immanuel*, "*God with us*;" according to the true meaning of the word *Jesus*, a Saviour, who is the Lord Jehovah, God and man in one person. This Almighty Conqueror manifested Himself in the flesh to conquer the devil, according to the promise made to Adam, and to save His people from their sins; from the power and dominion of them by His grace, and from the guilt and punishment of them by the propitiation of His blood and death.

This gracious and glorious victory over sin, Satan, and death, is shadowed out in the proper *Lessons*, spiritually applied; they are very suitable to the triumphant festival of our Redeemer's Birth. We read in the *Morning Lesson*, the proud and blasphemous threats of Sennacherib, and the deliverance of the Jews, that our thoughts may be raised from the earthly rescue—wonderful as it was by the miracle worked on their behalf—to a deliverance, infinitely greater, by Him whose Name is Wonderful, even the Mighty God. Thus we should consider the history of God's chosen

people of old, that our thoughts may be raised from things below to things above, from temporal to eternal.

The devout heart, which has been raised on high by the joyful celebration of our Redeemer's Birth, and has seen the seed of the woman born to bruise the head of the serpent and deliver man from his insulting tyranny, will easily find its type in the deliverance of Jerusalem, by the overthrow of the proud Assyrian.

And Hezekiah's miraculous recovery from a deadly sickness to health and new life, in the **Ebening Lesson**, will raise our minds spiritually to share in his song of praise: it will enforce our holy vows of love and obedience to Him who conquered our foe, and cured our mortal malady; "that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Thus it is that the song of Zachariah daily renews and nourishes our devotion, and shall continue to be used as a triumphant hymn of praise to the victorious Conqueror of sin and death, till the anthems of time shall pass into the endless song of eternity.

Second Sunday after Christmas.

"I am not worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant."—*Gen.* xxxii. 10.

THE spirit of humble thankfulness for past mercies, which these words imply, is a grace to which we are especially called in the Gospel. *Jacob.*

who spoke them, knew not of those great and wonderful acts of love with which God has since visited the race of man. But though he might not know the depths of God's counsels, he knew himself so far as to know that he was worthy of no good thing at all, and he knew also that Almighty God had shewn him great mercies and great truth: mercies, in that He had done for him good things, whereas he had deserved evil; and truth, in that He had made him promises, and had been faithful to them. In consequence, he overflowed with gratitude, when he looked back upon the past; marvelling at the contrast between what he was in himself, and what God had been to him.

Such thankfulness, I say, is especially a Christian grace, and is enjoined on us in the New Testament. For instance, we are exhorted to be "thankful," and to let "the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord" (Col. iii. 15, 16).

Elsewhere, we are told to "speak to ourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. v. 19, 20).

Again: "Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6).

Again: "In every thing give thanks: for this

is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. v. 18).

The Apostle, who writes all this, was himself an especial pattern of a thankful spirit: "Rejoice in the Lord alway," he says; "and again I say, Rejoice." "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." "I have all, and abound; I am full" (Phil. iv. 4, 11, 18).

Again: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. i. 12-14). O great Apostle! how could it be otherwise, considering what he had been and what he was, — transformed from an enemy to a friend, from a blind Pharisee to an inspired preacher? And yet there is another saint besides the patriarch Jacob, who is his fellow in this excellent grace—like them, distinguished by great dangers of life, and by the adoring love and the tenderness of heart with which he looked back upon the past: I mean "David, the son of Jesse; the man who was raised up on high; the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1).

The book of Psalms is full of instances of David's thankful spirit, which I need not cite here, as we are all so well acquainted with them. I will but refer to his thanksgiving when he set apart the precious materials for the building of the temple, as it occurs at the end of the first book of Chron-

icles ; when he rejoiced so greatly that he and his people had the heart to offer freely to God, and thanked God for his very thankfulness. "David the king rejoiced with great joy ; wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation ; and David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. . . . Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all ; and in Thine hand is power and might ; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chr. xxix. 9-14).

Such was the thankful spirit of David, looking back upon the past, wondering and rejoicing at the way in which his Almighty Protector had led him on, and at the works He had enabled him to do ; and praising and glorifying Him for His mercy and truth. David, then, Jacob, and St. Paul, may be considered the three great patterns of thankfulness which are set before us in Scripture ; saints, all of whom were peculiarly the creation of God's grace, and whose life and breath it was humbly and adoringly to meditate upon the contrast between what, in different ways, they had been, and what they were. A perishing wanderer had unexpectedly become a patriarch ; a shepherd, a king ; and a persecutor, an apostle. Each had been chosen, at God's secret pleasure, to fulfil a great purpose ; and each, while he did his utmost to fulfil it, kept praising God that he was made His instrument.

Of the first, it was said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. ix. 13). Of the second, that "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, even the hill of Sion, which He loved. He chose David, also, His servant, and took him away from the sheepfolds" (Psalm lxxviii. 68-71). And St. Paul says of himself, "Last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. xv. 8).

These thoughts naturally come over the mind at this season, when we are engaged in celebrating God's grace in making us His children by the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son, the greatest and most wonderful of all His mercies; and to the patriarch Jacob our minds are now particularly turned, by the first Lessons for this day, taken from the prophet Isaiah, in which the Church is addressed and comforted under the name of Jacob. Let us, then, in this season of thankfulness, and at the beginning of a new year, take a brief view of the character of this patriarch; and though David and Isaiah be the prophets of grace, and St. Paul its special herald and chief pattern, yet, if we wish to see an actual specimen of a habit of thankfulness, occupied in the remembrance of God's mercies, I think we shall not be wrong in betaking ourselves to Jacob. Jacob's distinguishing grace, as I think it may be called, was a habit of affectionate musing upon God's providences towards him in times past, and of overflowing thankfulness for them. Not that he had not other graces also, but this seems to have been his distinguishing grace. All good men have in their measure all

graces ; for He, by whom they have any, does not give one apart from the whole ; He gives the root, and the root puts forth branches. But since time, and circumstances, and their own use of the gifts, and their own disposition and character, have much influence on the mode of its manifestation, so it happens that each good man has his own distinguishing grace apart from the rest ; his own particular hue, and fragrance, and fashion, as a flower may have. As, then, there are numberless flowers on the earth, all of them flowers, and so far like each other, and all springing from the same earth, and nourished by the same air and dew, and none without beauty ; and yet some are more beautiful than others,—and of those which are beautiful, some excel in colours, and others in sweetness, and others in form ; and then, again, those which are sweet have such perfect sweetness, yet so distinct that we do not know how to compare them together, or to say which is the sweeter ; so is it with souls filled and nurtured by God's secret grace. Abraham, for instance, Jacob's forefather, was the pattern of faith. This is insisted on in Scripture, and it is not here necessary to shew that it was so. It will be sufficient to say, that he left his country at God's word, and at the same word took up the knife to slay his only son. Abraham seems to have had something very great and noble about him. He could realise, and make present to him, things unseen. He followed God in the dark as promptly, as firmly, with as cheerful heart and bold stepping, as if he were in broad daylight. There is something very great in this ; and therefore St. Paul calls Abraham *our* father, the father of Christians

as well as of Jews. For we are especially bound to walk by faith, not by sight ; and are blessed in faith, and justified by faith, as was faithful Abraham. Now (if I may say it, with due reverence to the memory of that favoured servant of God, in whose praise I am now speaking), that faith in which Abraham excelled, was not Jacob's characteristic excellence ; not that he had not faith, and great faith, else he would not have been so dear to God. His buying the birthright, and gaining the blessing from Esau, were proofs of faith. Esau saw nothing or little in them. He was profane ; easily parted with the one, and had no high ideas of the other. However, Jacob's faith, earnest and vigorous as it was, was not like Abraham's. Abraham kept his affections loose from every thing earthly, and was ready at God's word to slay his only son. Jacob had many sons, and may we not even say that he indulged them overmuch ? Even as regards Joseph, whom he so deservedly loved, beautiful and touching as his love of him is, yet there is a great contrast between his feelings towards the "son of his old age," and those of Abraham towards Isaac, the unexpected offspring of his hundredth year ; nor only such, but his long-promised only son, with whom were the promises. Again : Abraham left his country—so did Jacob ; but Abraham at God's word, Jacob from necessity, at the threat of Esau. Abraham, from the first, felt that God was his portion and his inheritance ; and, in a great and generous spirit, he freely gave up all he had, being sure that he should find *what was more excellent in doing so.* But Jacob, *in spite of his really living by faith, wished (if we*

may so say), as one passage of his history *shews*, to see before he fully believed. When he was escaping from Esau and came to Bethel, and God appeared to him in a dream and gave him promises, but not yet the performance of them,—what did he do? Did he simply accept them? He says, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, *then* shall the Lord be my God” (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21). He makes his obedience, in some sense, depend on a condition; and although we must not, and need not, take the words as if he meant that he would not serve God *till* and *unless* He did for him what He had promised, yet they seem to shew a fear and anxiety, gentle, indeed, and subdued, and very human (and therefore the more interesting and winning in the eyes of us common men who read his words), yet an anxiety which Abraham had not. We feel Jacob to be more like ourselves than Abraham was. What, then, was Jacob’s distinguishing grace, as faith was Abraham’s? I have already said it; I suppose, thankfulness. Abraham appears ever to have been looking forward in *hope*—Jacob looking back in *memory*. The one rejoicing in the future, the other in the past. The one setting his affections on the future, the other on the past. The one making his way towards the promises, the other musing over their fulfilment. Not that Abraham did not look back also; and Jacob, as he says, on his death-bed, “*wait for the salvation*” of God; but this was the *difference between them*: Abraham was a hero—Jacob “*a plain man dwelling in tents.*”

Jacob seems to have had a gentle, tender, affectionate, timid mind — easily frightened, easily agitated; loving God so much that he feared to lose Him, and like St. Thomas, perhaps, anxious for sight and possession, from earnest desire of having them. Were it not for faith, love would become impatient; and thus Jacob desired to possess, not from cold unbelief or hardness of heart, but from such a loving impatience. Such men are easily downcast, and must be treated kindly; they soon despond, they shrink from the world, for they feel its rudeness, which bolder natures do not. Neither Abraham nor Jacob loved the world. But Abraham did not fear, did not feel, it. Jacob felt and winced, as being wounded by it. You recollect his touching complaints: "All these things are against me." "Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Again, elsewhere, we are told: "All his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted." At another time: "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not" (Gen. xlii. 36, 38; xliii. 14; xxxvii. 35; xlv. 26, 27). You see what a child-like, sensitive, sweet mind he had. Accordingly, as I have said, his happiness lay, not in looking forward to the hope, but backwards upon the experience, of God's mercies towards him. He delighted lovingly to trace, and gratefully to acknowledge, what had been given, leaving the future to itself.

For instance, when coming to meet Esau, he brings before God in prayer, in words of which the text is part, what He had already done for

him, recounting His past favours with great and humble joy in the midst of his present anxiety. "O God of my father Abraham," he says, "and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, *which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.*" Again, after he had returned to his own land, he proceeded to fulfil the promise he had made to consecrate Bethel as a house of God: "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, *who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.*" Again, to Pharaoh, still dwelling on the past: "The days of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" (he means, in themselves, and separate from God's favour); "and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of this pilgrimage." Again, when he was approaching his end, he says to Joseph, "God Almighty *appeared unto me at Luz,*" that is, Bethel, "in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." Again, still looking back, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me, in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath." Again, his blessing upon *Ephraim and Manasseh*: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which *fed me all my life long unto this day,* the Angel

which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Again he looks back on the land of promise, though in the plentifulness of Egypt: "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." And when he gives command about his burial, he says, "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." He gives orders to be buried with his fathers. This was natural; but observe, he goes on to enlarge on the subject, after his special manner: "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; *and there I buried Leah.*" And further on, when he speaks of waiting for God's salvation, which is an act of hope, he so words it as at the same time to dwell upon the past: "*I have waited,*" he says; that is, all my life long, "I have waited for Thy Salvation, O Lord." Such was Jacob, living in memory rather than in hope, counting times, recording seasons, keeping days; having his history by heart, and his past life in his hand; and as if to carry on his mind into that of his descendants, it was enjoined upon them, that once a year every Israelite should appear before God with a basket of fruit of the earth, and call to mind what God had done for him and his father Jacob; "And he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, and became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. . . . And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders; *and hath brought us into this land . . . that floweth with milk and honey.* And now, behold,

I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me" (Deut. xxvi. 5-10).

Well were it for us, if we had the character of mind instanced in Jacob, and enjoined on his descendants; the temper of dependence upon God's providence, and thankfulness under it, and careful memory of all He has done for us. It would be well if we were in the habit of looking at all we have as God's gift, undeservedly given, and day by day continued to us solely by His mercy. He gave; He may take away. He gave us all we have, life, health, strength, reason, and enjoyment; the light of conscience; whatever we have good and holy within us; whatever faith we have; whatever of a renewed will; whatever love towards Him; whatever power over ourselves; whatever prospect of Heaven. He gave us relatives, friends, education, training, knowledge, the Bible, the Church. All comes from Him. He gave; He may take away. Did He take away, we should be called on to follow Job's pattern, and be resigned: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). While He continues His blessings, we should follow David and Jacob, by living in constant praise and thanksgiving, and in offering up to Him of His own.

We are not our own, any more than what we possess. We did not make ourselves; we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We cannot be our own masters. We are God's property, by creation, *by redemption, by regeneration.* He has a *three-fold claim upon us.* Is it not our happiness thus *to view the matter?* Is it any happiness, or any

comfort, to consider that we *are* our own? It may be thought so by the young and prosperous. These may think it a great thing to have every thing, as they suppose, their own way,—to depend on no one,—to have to think of nothing out of sight,—to be without the irksomeness of continual acknowledgment, continual prayer, continual reference of what they do to the will of another. But as time goes on, they, as all men, will find that independence was not made for man—that it is an unnatural state—may do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end. No; we are creatures, and as being such, we have two duties, to be resigned and to be thankful.

Let us, then, view God's providences towards us more religiously than we have hitherto done. Let us try to gain a truer view of what we are, and where we are, in His kingdom. Let us humbly and reverently attempt to trace His guiding hand in the years which we have hitherto lived. Let us thankfully commemorate the many mercies He has vouchsafed to us in times past, the many sins He has not remembered, the many dangers He has averted, the many prayers He has answered, the many mistakes He has corrected, the many warnings, the many lessons, the much light, the abounding comfort which He has from time to time given. Let us dwell upon times and seasons,—times of trouble, times of joy, times of trial, times of refreshment. How did He cherish us as children! How did He guide us in that dangerous time when the mind began to think for itself, and *the heart* to open to the world! How did He with *His sweet discipline* restrain our passions, mortify

our hopes, calm our fears, enliven our heavinesses, sweeten our desolateness, and strengthen our infirmities! How did He gently guide us towards the strait gate; how did He allure us along His everlasting way, in spite of its strictness, in spite of its loneliness, in spite of the dim twilight in which it lay! He has been all things to us. He has been, as He was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our God, our shield, and great reward, promising and performing day by day. "Hitherto has He helped us." "He hath been mindful of us, and He will bless us." He has not made us for nought; He has brought us thus far, in order to bring us further, in order to bring us on to the end. "He will never leave us nor forsake us; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." We may "cast all our care upon Him, who careth for us." What is it to us how our future path lies, if it be but His path? What is it to us whither it leads us, so that in the end it leads to Him? What is it to us what He puts upon us, so that He enables us to undergo it with a pure conscience, a true heart, not desiring any thing of this world in comparison of Him? What is it to us what terror befalls us, if He be but at hand to protect and strengthen us? "Thou, Israel," He says, "art My servant; Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "*Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy*

name ; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Is. xli. 8-14 ; xliii. 1-3).



THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."—*St. John* ii. 11.

 HE Epiphany is a season especially set apart for adoring the glory of Christ. The word may be taken to mean the manifestation of His glory, and leads on to the contemplation of Him as a king upon His throne in the midst of His court, with His servants around Him, and his guards in attendance. At Christmas we commemorate His grace; and in Lent His temptation; and on Good-Friday His sufferings and death; and on Easter-Day His victory; and on Holy Thursday his return to the Father; and in Advent we look forward to His second coming. And on all of these He does something, or suffers something: but in the Epiphany and the weeks after it, we celebrate Him, not as on His field of battle, or in His solitary retreat, but as an august and glorious King; we view Him as the object of our worship. Then only, during His whole earthly history, did He fulfil the type of Solomon, held (as I may say) a court, and received the homage of His subjects; namely, when he was an infant. His throne was His undefiled mother's arms; His chamber of *state was a cottage or a cave*; the worshippers *were the wise men of the East*, and they brought *presents, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* All

around and about Him seemed of earth, except to the eye of faith; one note alone had He of Divinity. As great men of this world are often plainly dressed, and look like other men, all but some one costly ornament on their breast or on their brow; so the Son of Mary, in His lowly dwelling, and in an infant's form, was declared to be the Son of God Most High, the Father of Ages, and the Prince of peace, by His star; a wonderful appearance which guided the wise men all the way from the East, even unto Bethlehem.

This being the character of this season of the year, our services throughout it, as far as they are proper to it, are full of the image of a king in his royal court, of a sovereign surrounded by subjects, of a glorious prince upon a throne. There is no thought of war, or of strife, or of suffering, or of triumph, or of vengeance, connected with the Epiphany, but of august majesty, of power, of prosperity, of splendour, of serenity, of benignity. Now, if at any time, it is fit to say, "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. ii. 20). "The Lord sitteth above the waterflood, and the Lord remaineth a King for ever." "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." "O magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before His footstool, for He is holy." "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; bring presents, and come into His courts."

I said that at this time of year the portions of our services which are proper to the season, are of a character to remind us of a king on his throne

receiving the devotions of his subjects. Such is the narrative itself, already referred to, of the coming of the wise men, who sought Him with their gifts from a place afar off, and fell down and worshipped Him. Such, too, is the account of His Baptism, which forms the **Second Lesson** of the Feast of the Epiphany, when the Holy Ghost descended on Him, and a voice from heaven acknowledged Him to be the Son of God. And if we look at the **Gospels** read throughout the season, we shall find them all containing some kingly action of Christ, the Mediator between God and man. Thus in the **Gospel** for the first Sunday, He manifests His glory in the temple at the age of twelve years, sitting among the doctors, and astonishing them with His wisdom. In the **Gospel** for the second Sunday, He manifests His glory at the wedding-feast, when He turned the water into wine, a miracle not of necessity or urgency, but especially an august and bountiful act—the act of a king, who, out of his abundance, gave a gift to His own, therewith to make merry with their friends. In the third Sunday, the leper worships Christ, who thereupon heals him; the centurion, again, reminds Him of His angels and ministers, and He speaks the word, and His servant is restored forthwith. In the fourth, a storm arises on the lake, while He is peacefully sleeping, without care or sorrow, on a pillow; then He rises and rebukes the winds and the sea, and a calm follows, deep as that of His own soul, and the beholders *worship Him*. And next He casts out Legion, *after the man possessed with it had run and also worshipped Him* (Mark v. 6). In the fifth, we

hear of His kingdom on earth, and of the enemy sowing tares amid the good seed. And in the sixth, of His second Epiphany from heaven, "with power and great glory."

Such is the series of manifestations which the Sundays after the Epiphany bring before us. When with the doctors in the temple, He is manifested as a Prophet—in turning the water into wine, as a Priest—in His miracles of healing, as a bounteous Lord, giving out of His abundance—in His rebuking the sea, as a Sovereign, whose word is law—in the parable of the wheat and tares, as a Guardian and Ruler—in his second coming, as a Lawgiver and Judge.

And as in these **Gospels** we hear of our Saviour's greatness, so in the **Epistles** and **First Lessons** we hear of the privileges and the duties of the new people whom He has formed to shew forth His praise. Christians are at once the temple of Christ, and His worshippers and ministers in the temple; they are the bride of the Lamb taken together; and taken one by one, they are the friends of the Bridegroom, and the guests at the marriage-feast. In these various points of view are they presented to us in the services during these weeks. In the **Lessons** from the Prophet Isaiah, we read of the gifts and privileges, the characteristics, the fortunes of the Church—how widely spreading, even throughout all the Gentiles; how awful and high, how miraculously endowed, how revered, how powerful upon earth, how rich in temporal goods, how holy, how pure in doctrine, how full of the Spirit. And in the **Epistles** for the successive Sundays, we hear of

the duties and distinguishing marks of her true members, principally as laid down in the 12th and 13th chapters of St. Paul to the Romans; then as the same Apostle enjoins them upon the Colossians; and then in St. John's exhortations in his General Epistle.

The *Collects* are of the same character, as befit the supplications of subjects coming before their King. The first is for knowledge and power, the second is for peace, the third is for strength in our infirmities, the fourth is for help against temptation, the fifth is for protection, and the sixth is for preparation and purification against Christ's second coming. There is none which would suit a season of trial, or of repentance, or of waiting, or of exultation—they befit a season of peace, thanksgiving, and adoration, when Christ is not manifested in pain, conflict, or victory, but in the tranquil possession of His kingdom.

“ Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”—*St. John* ii. 10.

The heart of childhood is all mirth;
We frolic to and fro,
As free and blythe, as if on earth
Were no such thing as woe.

But if, indeed, with reckless faith,
We trust the flattering voice
Which whispers, “ Take thy fill, ere death;
Indulge thee, and rejoice; ”

Too surely, every setting day,
Some lost delight we mourn;
The flowers all die along our way,
Till we, too, die forlorn.

Such is the world's gay, garish feast ;
In her first charming bowl,
Infusing all that fires the breast,
And cheats the unstable soul.

And still, as loud the revel swells,
The fever'd pulse beats higher ;
Till the sear'd taste from foulest wells
Is fain to slake its fire.

Unlike the feast of heavenly love,
Spread at the Saviour's word.
For souls that hear His call, and prove
Meet for His bridal board.

Why should we fear youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less ?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy
Which God hath deign'd to bless ?

For is it hope that thrills so keen
Along each bounding vein,
Still whispering glorious things unseen ?
Faith makes the vision plain.

The world would kill her soon, but faith
Her daring dreams will cherish ;
Speeding her gaze o'er time and death
To realms where nought can perish.

Or is it love, the dear delight
Of hearts that know no guile,
That all around see all things bright,
With their own magic smile ?

The silent joy, that sinks so deep,
Of confidence and rest—
Lull'd in a father's arms to sleep,
Clasp'd to a mother's breast ?

Who but a Christian, through all life,
That blessing may prolong ?
Who, through the world's sad day of strife,
Still chant his morning song ?

Fathers may hate us, or forsake,
 God's foundlings then are we ;
 Mother on child no pity take,
 But we shall still have Thee.

We may look home, and seek in vain
 A fond, fraternal heart ;
 But Christ hath given His promise plain
 To do a brother's part.

Nor shall dull age, as worldlings say,
 The heavenward flame annoy ;
 The Saviour cannot pass away,
 And with Him lives our joy.

Ever the richest, tenderest glow
 Sets round th' autumnal sun—
 But there sight fails ; no heart may know
 The bliss where life is done.

Such is Thy banquet, dearest Lord ;
 O give us grace, to cast
 Our lot with Thine, to trust Thy word,
 And keep our best till last.

" Whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifyeth the gold ?"—*Matt. xxiii. 17.*

A temple there has been upon earth, a *synagogue*, temple, made up of living stones, a temple which may say, composed of souls ; a temple with light for its light, and Christ for the high priest ; wings of angels for its arches, with saints and teachers for its pillars, and with worshippers for its pavement ; such a temple has been on earth ever since the Gospel was first preached. It is an unseen, secret, mysterious, spiritual temple existing every where throughout the kingdom of Christ *in all places*, as perfect in one place as if it were *in another*. Wherever there is faith and love, *there the temple is ;* faith and love, with the name of

are as heavenly charms and spells to make present to us this divine temple, in every part of Christ's kingdom. This temple is invisible, but it is perfect and real because it is invisible, and gains nothing in perfection by possessing visible tokens. There needs no outward building to meet the eye, in order to make it more of a temple than it is in itself. God, and Christ, and angels, and souls,—are not these a heavenly court, all perfect, to which this world can add nothing? Though faithful Christians worship without splendour, without show, in a homely and rude way, still their worship is as acceptable to God, as excellent, as holy, as though they worshipped in the public view of men, and with all the glory and riches of the world.

Such was the Church in its beginnings; “built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone;” “builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.” In the Apostles’ lifetime it was poor and persecuted, and the holy temple was all but invisible. There were no edifying rites, no various ceremonies, no rich music, no high cathedrals, no mystic vestments, no solemn altars, no stone, or marble, or metals, or jewels, or woods of cost, or fine linen, to signify outwardly, and to honour duly, the heavenly temple in which we stand and serve. The place where our Lord and Saviour first celebrated the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, was the upper room of a house, hired too or used for the occasion; that in which the Apostles and the holy women waited for the promised coming of the Comforter, was also “an upper room;” and that also in which St. Paul

preached at Troas, was an "upper chamber *where* they were gathered together." What other *place* of worship do we hear of? The water-side, *out i* the open air; as at Philippi, where, we are told "on the Sabbath" St. Paul and his companion "went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made." And by the sea-shore "They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed." And St. Peter was in prayer on the house-top; and St. Paul and St. Silas sang their hymns and psalms in prison, with their feet in the stocks; and St. Philip baptised the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert. Yet, wherever they were, whether in prison, or on the house-top, or in the wilderness, or by the water-side, or on the sea-shore, or in a private room, God and Christ were with them. The spirit of grace was there, the temple of God was around them. They were come unto the mystical Sion, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just. There needed not gold, nor jewels, nor costly array for those who had what, according to the text, was greater, who had the temple. It might be right and fitting, if possible, to have these precious things also, but it was not necessary; for which was the greater? Such things did not make the temple more holy, but became themselves holy by being used for the temple; the gold did not sanctify the temple, but the temple was greater, and sanctified the gold. Gold is a thing of nought without Christ's Presence; and *with* His Presence, as in the days of His *earthly* ministry, it might be dispensed with.

The case is the same as regards the immediate successors of the Apostles, who were in still more forlorn circumstances, as regards worship, than the Apostles themselves. The Christians who came after them were obliged to worship in graves and tombs, to save their lives from the persecutor. In the eastern and southern parts, where the Apostles and the first converts lived, before the glad sound of the Gospel had reached these northern and distant countries, they were accustomed to bury in caves dug out of the rock. Long galleries there are still remaining, in some places miles underground, on each side of which the dead were placed: there the poor persecuted Christians met for worship, and that by night. Or the great people of the day built for themselves high and stately tombs above ground, as large as houses for the living: here, too, in the darkness and solitude of night did the Saints worship; or in the depth of some wood, perhaps, where no one was likely to discover them. Such were the places in which the invisible temple was revealed in times of heathenism; and who shall say that it wanted aught of outward show to make it perfect?

This is true, and ever to be borne in mind; and yet no one can deny, on the other hand, that a great object of Christ's coming was to subdue this world—to claim it as His own—to assert His rights as its master—to destroy the usurped dominion of the enemy—to shew Himself to all men, and to take possession. He is that mustard-tree which was destined silently to spread and overshadow all lands. He is that leaven which was secretly to make its way through the mass of human opinions

and institutions till the whole was leavened. Heaven and earth had hitherto been separate. His gracious purpose was, to make them one, and that by making earth like heaven. He was in the world from the beginning, and man worshipped other gods; He came into the world in the flesh, and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But He came in order to *make* them receive Him, know Him, worship Him. He came to absorb this world unto Himself, that, as He was light, so it might be light also. When He came, He had not a place to lay His head; but He came to make Himself a place, to make Himself a home, to make Himself houses, to fashion for Himself a glorious dwelling out of this whole world, which the powers of air had taken captive. He came in the dark, in the dark night was He born, in a cave underground; in a cave where cattle were stabled, there was He housed; in a rude manger was He laid; there first He laid His head. But He meant not, blessed be His name, He meant not there to remain for ever. He did not resign Himself to that obscurity; He came into that cave to leave it. The King of the Jews was born to claim the kingdom; yea, rather, the Hope of all nations, and the King of the whole earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords; and He gave not "sleep to His eyes or slumber to His eyelids," till He had changed His manger for a royal throne, and His grot for high palaces. Lift up your eyes, my brethren, and look around, for it is fulfilled at *this day*; yea, long ago, for many ages, and in *many countries*. "Wisdom hath builded her house, *she hath hewn out her seven pillars.*" Where is

the grot? where the stall for cattle? where the manger? where the grass and straw? where the unseemly furniture of that despised place? Is it possible that the Eternal Son should have been born in a hole of the earth? Was the great miracle there wrought, whereby a pure and spotless Virgin brought forth God? Strange condescension, undergone to secure a strange triumph! He purposed to change the earth, and He began "in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness, and in the deep." All was to be by Him renewed, and He availed Himself of nothing that was, that out of nothing He might make all things. He was not born in the temple of Jerusalem; He abhorred the palace of David; He laid Himself on the damp earth in the cold night, a light shining in a dark place, till by the virtue that went out of Him, He should create a temple worthy of His name.

And lo, in omen of the future, even in His cradle the rich and wise of the earth seek Him with gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, as an offering. And He puts aside the swaddling clothes, and takes instead "a coat without seam, woven from the top throughout." And He changes water into wine; and Levi feasts Him; and Zaccheus receives Him; and Mary anoints His head. Pass a few generations, and the whole face of things is changed; the earth is covered with His temples, as it has been for ages. Go where you will, you find the eternal mountains hewn and fashioned into shrines where He may dwell, Who was an outcast in the days of His flesh. Rivers and mines pay tribute of their richest jewels; forests are searched for their choicest woods; the skill of man is put to

task to use what nature furnishes. Go through the countries where His name is known, and you will find all that is rarest and most wonderful in nature or art has been consecrated to Him. King's palaces are poor, whether in architecture or decorations, compared with the shrines which have been reared to Him. The invisible temple has become visible. As on a misty day, the gloom gradually melts and the sun brightens, so have the glories of the spiritual world lit up this world below. The dull and cold earth is penetrated by the rays. All around we see glimpses or reflections of those heavenly things which the elect of God shall one day see face to face. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; "the temple has sanctified the gold," and the prophecies made to the Church have been fulfilled to the letter. "The glory of Lebanon has been given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." "The glory of Lebanon, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of His sanctuary, and to make the place of His feet glorious. The multitude of camels have covered it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba have come; they have brought gold and incense, and shewn forth the praises of the Lord." "The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, have come over to it, in chains have they come over; they have fallen down, they have made supplication" (Isa. xxxv. 2; lx. 6-13; xlv. 14).

And He has made Him a temple, not only out of things without life, but of men also as parts of it. Not gold and silver, jewels and fine linen, and

skill of man to use them, make the house of God, but worshippers, the souls and bodies of men, whom He has redeemed. He takes possession of the whole man, body as well as soul ; for St. Paul says, " I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). And He claims us as His own, not one by one, but altogether, as one great company ; for St. Peter says, that we, " as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5). All of us, and every one, and every part of every one, must go to make up His mystical body ; for the Psalmist says, " O God, my heart is ready ; I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have. Awake, then, harp and lute ; I myself will awake right early. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the people ; I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations." Our tongues must preach Him, and our voices sing of Him, and our knees adore Him, and our hands supplicate Him, and our hearts bow before Him, and our countenances beam of Him, and our gait herald Him. And hence arise joint worship, forms of prayer, ceremonies of devotion, the course of services, orders of ministers, holy vestments, solemn music, and other things of a like nature ; all which are, as it were, the incoming into this world of the invisible kingdom of Christ, the fruit of its influence, the sample of its power, the earnest of its victories, the means of its manifestation.

Things temporal have their visible establishment.

Kings' courts and palaces, councils and armies, have dazzled the multitude, and blinded them, till they worshipped them as idols. Such is our nature, we must have something to look up to. We cannot help admiring *something*; and if there is nothing good to admire, we admire what is bad. When, then, men see proud Babel set up on high, with all her show and pomp—when they see or hear of great cities, with their stately mansions, the streets swarming with chariots and horses innumerable, and the shops filled with splendid wares, and great men and women richly dressed, with many attendants, and men crying, "Bow the knee," and soldiers in bright array, with the sound of the trumpet, and other military music, and other things which one could mention, were it reverent to be particular,—simple men are tempted to look up to all this as the summit of perfection and blessedness, nay, as I have said, to worship what seems to them, though they do not so express it, the presence of the Unseen. Hence come in servility, coveting, jealousy, ambition; men wish to be great in this world, and try to be great; they aim at riches, or they lie in wait for advancement. Christ, then, in order to counteract this evil, has mercifully set up His own court and His own polity, that men might have something to fix their eyes upon of a more divine and holy character than the world can supply; that poverty, at least, might divide men's admiration with riches; that meekness might be set up on high as well as pride, and *sanctity* become our ambition as well as luxury.

So ran the promise: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never

hold their peace day nor night" (Is. lxii. 6). "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein. . . . Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands" (Is. xlii. 10-12). And these words began to be fulfilled even from the time that Christ came; for, as I said when I began, St. Paul and St. Silas *sang* in the prison; and when he and his party left Tyre, the men, women, and children, who accompanied them out, *kneeled down* on the shore with them, and prayed. Such were the forms of worship in the beginning, till, as time went on, the Church, like some fair tree, put out her branches and leaves, and stood complete in all manner of holy symbols and spiritual ordinances, an outward sign of that unseen temple in which Christ had dwelt from the first.

By such thoughts we may be enabled to esteem rightly of outward things. The temple is greater than the gold; therefore care not though the gold be away. He sanctifies it; therefore cherish the gold while it is present. Christ is with us, though there be no outward show: suppose all the comely appendage of our worship stripped off, yet where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them. You will ask whether this does not countenance persons who hold meetings *apart* from the Church, or who preach in the *streets*? No, it does not; because, in such cases,

men do not meet together "in the name of Christ." He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name." Now, it does not follow that men *are* met in His name because they say or think they are; for He warns us, "Many shall come in My name saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Many a man *thinks* he is speaking in Christ's name, when he is preaching his own doctrine. Christ did not send such men, yet they have run, and He owns them not, though they even worship in church. In church or in the fields would be the same in this matter. Stone walls do not make a church. Though they were in the vastest, noblest, richest building on earth, still Christ would not be with those who preach another Gospel than that which He delivered once for all. This is the very point I am insisting on. It is the temple that sanctifieth the gold; it is nothing but the invisible and heavenly presence which sanctifieth any place or any thing. Magnificent or mean, costly or common, it alone sanctifies either worshippers or building. "Heaven is His throne, and earth His footstool;" "the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him;" much less any house which we can build. High and low is alike to Him. This is a very obvious and very comfortable reflection, when we think of the great irreverences and profanations which sometimes take place in church. Men come in lightly and thoughtlessly; they care not to uncover their heads; they talk, and laugh, and *even sing*, as if they were in a common building; *or, when there is any needful work to be done in it, and tools and other implements are brought in,*

they seem to think as if, all of a sudden, it were turned into an unconsecrated place, because it is necessary to exercise a trade in it. Or perhaps, if it so happen, they idle in it at other times, and think that God is not there, because man is not there to see them. They who profane His presence, who treat its resting-place as a common house, and make free with it, these men do not hurt Christ, but they hurt themselves. The temple is greater than the gold.

And while He is displeased with the profane, He accepts our offerings made in faith, whether they be greater or less. He accepts our gold and our silver; not to honour Himself thereby, but in mercy to us. When Mary poured the ointment upon His head, it was her advantage, not His; He praised her, and said, "She hath done what she could." Every one must do his best. If we did all, it would be little, not worthy of Him; if we do little, it may suffice to shew our faith, and He in His mercy will accept whatever we can offer.

Services for the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah xlv.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah xlvi.

Epistle, Romans xii. 1.

Gospel, St. Luke ii. 41.

The Collect.—O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the prayers of Thy people which call upon Thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to

do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Church commemorates Christ's Epiphany, that is, His manifestation as the Light of the world, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, in the season especially dedicated to this mystery, and then goes on to apply it to the instruction of her children. For, in her great wisdom and care for their salvation, she ever mingles practice with doctrine, never separating faith from works. The Saviour of mankind came and appeared, "to give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death ;" by which is meant, the Gentile world dark and bewildered. The first Collect after the Epiphany, therefore, supplicates our Lord's merciful acceptance of our prayers, calling upon Him for spiritual illumination, that we may see our way, and have strength to walk in it ; that, being called out of darkness into His marvellous light, we may walk as children of the light, abandoning the ways and works of darkness, the works of the devil, who is the prince of darkness : and being enlightened and healed by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, we may proceed without stumbling, as in the day of light and truth, leading to life eternal.

This our happy course of Christian life the Church very plainly points out in her Epistles, and particularly in those for the three first of the *Sundays* after the Epiphany ; the number of these *Sundays* being yearly more or fewer, according as *Easter* is later or earlier. On the three first Sun-

days she reads the whole of the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, who had been converted from the dismal state of heathenism to the purity and holiness manifested by the *Gospel*, that is, the *glad tidings* of salvation by Christ. The principal virtues which this day's *Epistle* enforces are, purity and humility; presenting our bodies holy to God, and forsaking the corrupt fashions of the world; conforming to the good will of God in all things, and submissively keeping that place in the Church, Christ's mystical body, where He has set us. And thus, each in his station and capacity contributing his share, the good of the whole and of its several members shall be best forwarded.

The holy *Gospel* draws our devout attention to our Lord's appearing or manifestation in the temple, when He was twelve years old. Then and there He entereth upon His Father's business, being fully filled with divine wisdom, of which He is Himself the fountain, and the teacher of it to all other true teachers. The house of God, now no longer confined to Judea, is spread by Him through all nations, and made to all people the house of prayer—to Gentiles as well as Jews. In this holy Catholic, that is, universal, Church, He gives us His presence in His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, to teach, atone for, and govern us. He is still carrying on His Father's business, for which He came into the world; forwarding, by the ministry which He left behind Him, and the means of grace which He appointed, the preparation of men for perfect bliss and glory in the heavenly temple above. Him meanwhile we must constantly and devoutly seek in His temple, where,

when but even two or three are gathered together in His name, that is, with His authority and commission, there is He in the midst of them; and there, if we seek Him aright, we shall surely find Him. The devout soul, therefore, will ever have "a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord, his heart and his flesh will rejoice in the living God." As we read in that beautiful Psalm,¹ the pious heart, like the sparrow or swallow drawn to its nest and young by the feelings of nature, will be forcibly drawn to the blessed place, where only upon earth God, its supreme delight and exceeding joy and desire, is to be found; even in His house and at His altar, according to His express promise. If we duly seek Him there at all possible opportunities, He will be found of us, dwell in us at all times, will never leave us nor forsake us. Should He seem to hide His face from us for a moment, it is only to stir us up to persist in our seeking Him. This, however, we must do with sorrow, such as the holy pain felt under the dread of losing Him. After He has tried us, He will bless our persevering search with the smiles of His countenance. "Seek ye My face," He graciously says; and the devout heart instantly replies, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek;" fervently adding its earnest request, "O hide not Thou Thy face from me, nor cast Thy servant away in displeasure. Thou hast been my succour, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation" (Psalm xxvii. 9, 10, 11).

The clouds and mists that hide God's face from

¹ Psalm lxxxiv.

us, and by hurting the eye of our faith, hinder our spiritual sight of Him, are the idols, the deceitful things of this present world; the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life—covetousness, luxury, and ambition. These are the idols which turn away our hearts from God, and hide His face from us. When, therefore, in this day's *Lesson*, and frequently through the season, we hear the upbraidings of the idolatry of the Gentiles in the days of their darkness, their falling down and worshipping stocks and stones, we must not bless ourselves as quite free from idolatry because we blame the ridiculous worship of the heathens. We must examine our own hearts, and see that there be no idols set up there, to which we give our love, and thought, and care, more than to the only true God. He is a jealous God, and will not give His honour to any of those false imaginations, lying vanities, which would take His place in our hearts. For still the divine teaching of St. John will be good and needful. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"—and every Christian should attend seriously to what is said of the heathen idolatry in these *Lessons*. Turned from idols, most zealous should we be to worship the living and true God in sincerity of heart, and serve Him only whose service is perfect freedom, even the glorious liberty of the children of God.

*Services for the Second Sunday after the
Epiphany.*

Morning Lesson, Isaiah li.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah liii.

Epistle, Romans xii. 6.

Gospel, St. John ii. 1.

The Collect.—Almighty and everlasting God,
Who dost govern all things in heaven and earth;
mercifully hear the supplications of Thy people,
and grant us Thy peace all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The glorious Light of heaven, Whose appearance we at this time commemorate, arose with healing in His rays, to give light in darkness, and peace in war, stilling the tumult of sin and wickedness, which supported the empire of the devil, the prince of darkness, in the world. The **Collect** for Sunday last, accordingly, having prayed for the light of true and saving knowledge, that for this day begs the guidance of it as a lantern to our paths; that, amidst the snares and dangers that surround us, we may see our way, and by the guard of Divine grace, be kept in peace and safety. The **Epistle**, which is the continuation of that for Sunday last, clearly and strongly teaches us to cultivate this sweet peace, pointing out, by the practice of the several precepts which it lays down, the way of peace with God and man. Diligence to improve the gifts which God, the fountain of them all, has distributed severally to every man, as best and fittest for him, will, by God's blessing, make him happy, and prove an advan-

tage to the whole body, each member of it, as a brother, enjoying his happiness, and grieving with him in his sorrow ; the Spirit of God giving life to all and every one ; the spirit of meekness amidst injuries received from others, the spirit of prayer, and patience, and lowliness of heart. Such a spirit, guiding and governing the Church and all its members, would preserve entire peace in it, and spread it so far as to turn earth into paradise. Meantime the most lively emblem or type upon earth of heavenly peace and joy, is the holy state of matrimony, as it was "instituted (or appointed) by God in the time of man's innocency," and still keeps its dignity, provided Christ makes the marriage holy by His gracious blessing. He will turn its water into wine, raising the weak and mixed delights of earth to be an emblem or foretaste of the unmixed and endless joys of heaven. It shall most certainly be so, if His blessed mother's words in the *Gospel* be observed, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." However unlikely the means which He orders may seem to obtain the end, if we readily and faithfully obey, we shall find the blessing of His Almighty and never-failing word. By the strengthening of His Holy Spirit, He gives to the faithful and devout soul that mystic wine of the spiritual marriage-feast, which truly makes glad the heart rejoicing in the love of Christ.

This first miracle of our Lord most plainly shews forth His glory, exciting our firm belief in Him, which the holy *Lessons* for the day most powerfully strengthen, increasing our love to Him, by the wondrous report of it, in the evening particularly, which the weak nature of man will not

easily receive as true. It is difficult to his weak reason to believe undoubtingly, that the glorious Majesty of heaven, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, condescended to be born of a woman, and grow up as a tender plant out of a dry ground, without beauty and grandeur, being a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, treated with the greatest scorn, and willingly loading Himself with pain and anguish greater than can be told. For with this wondrous design He appeared in the world, to take away the sin of it by the sacrifice of Himself, that He might suffer and die in the stead of the sinner, and restore the condemned criminal to mercy and favour. This surpassing love of His towards us must surely cause us to love Him in return; and our love must be shewn by constantly keeping His commandments, and doing with heedful care whatsoever He has said unto us. So we shall best honour the Mother, by loving and obeying the Son, whom she herself honours and worships in all humility as God, although by the Holy Ghost she conceived Him in her virgin womb, and brought Him forth as man. And yet He that was born of her being both God and man in one person, we call her, without hesitation, *the Mother of God*, according to the doctrine of the Universal Church. And in so calling her, we follow the example of her *inspired* cousin Elizabeth, who called her the mother of her Lord. Filled with the Holy Ghost, while the babe leaped in her womb for joy, she cried out in rapture, "*Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*" And she herself, the *most* lowly as well as holy Virgin, at the same

time and place, foretold that all generations should call her blessed. The honour of the blessed God Himself, which He will not give to another, however high, must never be given to her, and would indeed be highly offensive to her. But we must not run from one extreme into the other,—from paying her divine honour, into a want of the veneration which is most justly due to her. The most exalted of all creatures she undoubtedly is; most highly honoured by Him, who, when He took upon Him to deliver man, did not disdain the Virgin's womb. In the human flesh which He took of her, He, by dying, overcame the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief, increasing in us that faith which worketh by love, the love of Jesus. To whom be love and praise eternally.

Services for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah lv.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah lvi.

Epistle, Romans xii. 16.

Gospel, St. Matthew viii. 1.

The Collect.—Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth Thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Great is the mystery of godliness,” cries the inspired Apostle; “God was manifest in the flesh,

justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles." This is the joyful mystery upon which the Church, at this season, leads us to meditate devoutly. The heavenly light, which His blessed Epiphany, His manifestation to the Gentiles, brought to the world that sat in darkness, shewed us our real state, and the dangers wherewith we were surrounded; but which before had been hidden from us by the "darkness" and ignorance in which we "sat." Now, seeing the snares which are around us, and feeling our own natural weakness, we, in the excellent Collect for this day, humbly look up to the Almighty hand which alone can keep off our enemies, strengthen our frailty, and guide our steps safely amidst those dangers which threaten our falling.

The Epistle continues to direct us in the way of peace and love with all men, even our enemies, shewing the secret and sure way of rest and quiet, with true happiness here and hereafter. Such were the glorious glad tidings which announced His birth and coming into the world, bringing peace to earth as well as glory to God in the highest, and procuring by His all-atoning mediation the good-will of God towards men, mercifully overcoming our evil with His good. Of this, as of every virtue, He left us an example, that we should follow His steps, by pardoning and praying for our enemies, returning their evil with our good will, and good deeds also, if they be in our power. Thus pleasing God by obeying His will, He will make even our enemies to be at peace with us. Diseased and naturally doomed to death as we all are, the holy Gospel leads us to

Jesus for the cure of the leprosy of our sins, well represented by that loathsome disease, and by the palsy, which weakens all the powers of the body, as sin does those of the soul. We read here of the miraculous cure of both these sicknesses, for which mercy the patients (or sufferers) were fitted by deep humility and strong faith. We too shall find the cure of our spiritual sicknesses, if we duly seek and go to that Divine Almighty Physician who came to bind up our bruises, and cure our diseases. He Himself submitted to sores and sufferings, to restore us to saving health. What thanks and praise shall we render for all the benefits that He hath done unto us ! His kindly warning voice is, " Behold, thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto Thee " (St. John v. 4).

In the holy *Lessons*, the same merciful and compassionate Lord, with His tender pity, movingly and strongly invites and calls the faint and thirsty to come unto Him, the fountain of living and healing water, and He will cool their feverish heats, and give that refreshment to their famishing and dying souls which no created thing can give. Only let them not miss the opportunity, nor delay to observe and carefully follow His prescriptions and appointed means ; for He assures them thereby of saving health, and a joyful end to all their miseries. Most joyful in that case shall be the soul's separation from the body by a blessed death, when it shall leave all pain and sorrow behind, and happiness shall smile around ; then all *its briers and thorns* will be changed for the sweet

and beautiful things of another paradise, which will never fade or languish.

The Evening Lesson, prescribing the condition of this instant salvation ready to be revealed (or made known), plainly points out the receiving of the Gentiles into the Church, and their equal privileges with the Jews in all the holy offices of that sacred place, which by Christ is made the house of *prayer* (all religious offices) to *all nations*. At the same time the Jews are heavily rebuked because they profaned and abused their advantages, and are threatened that they shall be cast off in consequence. Those who have succeeded them (as the chosen people of God) are warned (as by the Apostle to the Romans, xi. 17-22) not to be high-minded, but fear and take care. The Jews were cast off for their sins, and because they ungratefully rejected their Saviour and His salvation; and if the Gentiles, through pride of heart, run into unbelief and disobedience, they also shall be cut off. May we, then, by walking worthy of our vocation, give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. We have been redeemed, but we are not yet finally saved; He Who has redeemed us desires our salvation, and that in order to attain it we may come to the knowledge of the truth, receiving the truth in such love of it as keeps the commandments.

Services for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah lvii.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah lviii.

Epistle, Romans xiii. 1.

Gospel, St. Matt. viii. 23.

The Collect.—O God, Who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Sweet is the light,” says Solomon, “and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” The light, which we now commemorate, spread by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, while it enlighten us, heals and helps us, enabling us, in ourselves weak and unstable, to shun the dangers which it shews us. Thus trusting, we pray, accordingly, in the **Collect** for this day, that our gracious Lord would defend us by His protecting power, that we may escape unhurt amidst all the temptations and snares of the enemy. Our adversary (or enemy) is the prince of darkness, who blinds the minds of his captives, and then leads them into the dreadful miseries of his slavery and bondage. To destroy his works, and deliver man, the Son of God was manifested. The works of the devil are, all sin, confusion, and disorder springing from pride, the first sin, which turned the creature from subjection to the Creator. He (the devil) was the first rebel in the world, who was not con-

tented to keep in his proper situation ; and he still nurses and stirs up sedition, schism, and all division in Church and State. Since he cannot attack God directly, he endeavours to oppose His authority by stirring up inferiors against their superiors. Most seasonably, then, does the Church, by this day's **Epistle**, teach us to be subject to the rightful powers set over us by God, that we may, by prayer and patience, fulfilling our several duties in humble submission, lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. The devil is also, by God's permission, (Who overrules his malice, and makes him an unwilling instrument of His Providence,) the prince of the power of the air, who delights in storms and movements, the raging of the sea, and the madness of the people. This is spiritually represented in the **Gospel**, by the tempest at sea, and the fury of the man possessed with devils upon the land. The Almighty Saviour alone can, and will in due time, still the one and cure the other. Although our fears sometimes almost overwhelm us, when our Jesus seems to be asleep, He, the Divine Keeper of Israel, Who neither slumbers nor sleeps, will manifest His power, hush the storm, and bring us safely and soon to the harbour where we would be. By our furious passions, and raging lusts and appetites, we become slaves to the evil spirit, which now worketh in the children of disobedience to the misery of each person, and the disquiet of society. He Who came to bruise the head and bind the hands of the old serpent will drive him from his usurped place, and deliver his miserable captives. *He will leave only in his power those swinish*

souls, who, however often washed, by falling again into sin, return to wallow in the mire. These obstinate sinners, the devil taking full and final possession, will drown in "the bottomless pit" of endless horrors. Of all sins, the lust of uncleanness, when, by indulgence, it becomes a habit, is the most hopeless of cure, as we see proved also in the case of drunkenness. The mind is darkened, the eye of the soul shut against the light of heaven, and the impenitent sinner is hurried over a precipice into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Rev. xxi. 8).

For, although hardened sinners will not believe, the word of God is eternal truth, and its threats will be fulfilled as well as its promises. But while they live, there is still some hope, growing, however, more and more faint. And therefore we heartily pray that He Who is both Almighty and All-merciful, the Redeemer of lost man (Who appeared for that purpose, when He sent His converted Apostle to the Gentiles), would "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in Christ."

The proper *Lessons* agree well with the rest of the service for the day. They assure us that there is no peace to the wicked, who are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,—a lively figure of their disordered passions and of the bad effects of sinful lusts. Repentance and conquest of all wicked desires by the power of sincere and inward as well

as the outward form of religion (which must never be separated), can alone restore us to divine peace and happy tranquillity in our Saviour Christ; for so the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. He descended from His high and lofty throne to revive the contrite and penitent, and give rest to the humble and meek.

Services for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah lix.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah lxiv.

Epistle, Colossians iii. 12.

Gospel, St. Matthew xiii. 24.

The Collect.—O Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy Church and household continually in Thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by Thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The **Gospel** for Sunday last presented to us the Church in a storm at sea; a striking emblem or sign of this changing tempestuous world; yet *manifesting* our Divine Jesus to be our sure Saviour, "God with us," Almighty and Eternal, although clothed in the weakness of our mortal nature, that He might be our safety in danger, and our life in death.

For the safe keeping and defence of the Church, the vessel of Christ's own framing and building, in

which we are all embarked for the port of Paradise, the special prayer for this day is made. Every single member of the Church is interested in its welfare; therefore we should most heartily pray that it may be kept and guided in the true religion, and, by the influence of Divine grace, may be evermore defended by Almighty power. The temper of the members of the Church—the sailors and voyagers of this mystic ship, whether governors or those committed to their conduct—is well and clearly taught in the **Epistle**. All quiet and humbly submissive (for strife and tumult among them would put them in danger of perishing), each cheerfully and lovingly acting his part in the place appointed for him, and encouraging his fellows by Divine love, its heavenly music giving joy to the heart, and driving off the evil spirit of melancholy and sullenness. Where Jesus is, there is true joy, even in the midst of worldly sorrow.

The danger of the Church under another figure—changing the scene from the sea to a field enclosed (or shut in) on the land—is represented by the devil's watchfulness while the spiritual labourers sleep. He lays hold of that opportunity to sow his tares, the seeds of schism, heresy, and doctrines most harmful to the souls of men. These at first grow up without being seen, the worst of errors having put on the appearance of goodness and of great zeal for the revival of faith and holiness. The sects and parties which spring up in consequence are most ruinous to the true faith, and that unity of spirit in the bond of peace for which the Lord of the Vineyard so earnestly prayed at the time of His Passion (sufferings). He prayed that

it might prevail among His followers for the safety of His true religion, which is much kept back in its progress, and cramped in its fruits of holiness and righteousness, by the overspreading growth of these hurtful weeds. "The time will come," the Apostle foretold, "when men will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and shall turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Tim. iv. 3). For the truth is old, and has no charms of novelty to tickle the fancies of unstable people, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. The truth, like Him Who is truth itself, as well as the way that leads to life, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Meantime He is merciful and gracious, and waits long, forbearing to pull up these unhappy tares, or to treat them harshly, in hope that they may change their hue in His field, that the tares may become wheat. But He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, and make a full and final separation between the tares and the wheat, in that great harvest of the world.

In the **Morning Lesson**, the disordered and weakly state of the Church, corrupted by the enemy, is feelingly pointed out; in that for the **Evening**, we read the Church's longing desire, amidst her sorrows, for her full deliverance, her complete redemption from sin and death, and lasting state of heavenly happiness. And for this she looks forward to the time when He, Who came once in great humility, shall rend the heavens and *come down* in great glory to conquer the whole

dominion—the proud mountains of the enemy; and to carry those who, with faith and patience, have waited for Him, to the unseen pleasure, greater than man can conceive, of the everlasting kingdom of joy and glory. Happy are they, in time and éternity, who with firm faith and steady holiness look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, sealed with the faithful. Amen.

Services for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Morning Lesson, Isaiah lxv.

Evening Lesson, Isaiah lxvi.

Epistle, 1 St. John iii. 1.

Gospel, St. Matthew xxiv. 23.

The Collect.—O God, Whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; grant us, we beseech Thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure; that, when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom; where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

As the Advent, so the Epiphany of our Lord is twofold. When first He *came* and was *manifested* to destroy the works of the prince of darkness, and give light unto the world, He then, that He

might cure our pride, the root and beginning of all sin, the ruin of angels and men, appeared in great humility, was born in a stable, and died upon a cross. But at His second *coming* and *manifestation*, He shall be revealed from Heaven in His glorious Majesty, to ascend His throne and judge the world. With an eye to this last grand Epiphany, as well as to teach the high privileges and strict obligation to purity and holiness, in opposition to all the works of the devil, the **Collect**, **Epistle**, and **Gospel** for this last Sunday of the Season are appointed. The **Lessons**, ending those of Isaiah, which have been read since the first Sunday in Advent, shew forth plainly the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and the final end of all things, when "the Lord will *come* with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire" (Is. lxvi. 15). The least attention to it will shew the whole service to be of this nature, and if devout attention be paid to it, it will strongly enforce the very important and practical application of the whole, which is plainly pointed out and powerfully taught in the inspired words of St. Paul to Titus, first bishop of Crete, which may well be called the sum of the Gospel, in faith and practice. "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious *appearing* (Epiphany in the original) of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ; *Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem*

us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 11-14).

It were well if these four verses were treasured up in every Christian's faithful memory, and made the subject of frequent devout meditation. The beautiful **Collect** for the day gives us an excellent prayer for grace to comply with them, that grace which ends in glory. This **Collect**, which, with the Service belonging to it, was added at the last review of the Liturgy, upon the King's happy restoration, is seldom used in public. It answers well, however, as a general **Collect** for the Season of Epiphany, as that of the first Sunday, through Advent. It may with great advantage be used as a private and family prayer,—the Prayer-book being indeed a store-house of doctrine and devotion fitted for all occasions.





THE
SEASON BEFORE LENT.

ALLELUIA !¹ best and sweetest
Of the hymns of praise above !
Alleluia ! thou repeatest,
Angel host, these notes of love :
This ye utter,
While your golden harps ye move.

Alleluia ! Church victorious,
Join the concert of the sky !
Alleluia ! bright and glorious,
Lift, ye saints, this strain on high !
We, poor exiles,
Join not yet your melody.

Alleluia ! strains of gladness
Suit not souls with anguish torn :
Alleluia ! sounds of sadness
Best become our state forlorn :
Our offences
We with bitter tears must mourn.

But our earnest supplication,
Holy God, we raise to Thee :
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Make us all Thy joys to see !
Alleluia !
Ours at length this strain shall be.

¹ In the ancient Church, the allelujah, "praise the Lord," which is the voice of rejoicing, ceased on Septuagesima Sunday, and was not renewed till Easter.

Septuagesima Sunday.

"I have all, and abound; I am full."—*Phil.* iv. 18.

SUCH is St. Paul's confession concerning his temporal condition, even in the midst of his trials. Those trials brought with them spiritual benefits; but, even as regarded this world, he felt he had cause for joy and thankfulness, in spite of sorrows, pains, labours, and self-denials. He did not look on this life with bitterness, complain of it morosely, or refuse to enjoy it; he was not soured, as the children of men often are, by his trials; but he felt that if he had troubles in this world, he had blessings also; and he did not reject these, but made much of them. "I have all, and abound; I am full," he says. And elsewhere he tells us, that "every creature of God is good," and that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

Gloom is no Christian temper; that repentance is not real which has not love in it, that self-chastisement is not acceptable which is not sweetened by faith and cheerfulness. We must live in sunshine, even when we sorrow; we must live in God's presence—we must not shut ourselves up in our own hearts—even when we are reckoning up our past sins.

These thoughts are suitable on this day, when we first catch a sight, as it were, of the forty days of Lent. If God, then, gives us grace to repent, it is well; if He enables us to chasten soul and body, to Him be praise; and for that very rea-

son, while we do so, we must not cease rejoicing in Him. All through Lent we must rejoice, while we afflict ourselves. Though "many be called but few chosen;" though we must "so run that we may obtain;" though we must be "temperate in all things," and "keep under our body and bring it into subjection," lest we be cast-aways yet, through God alone, we can do this; and while He is with us, we cannot but be joyful. His absence only is a cause for sorrow.

The three holy children are said to have stood up in the midst of the fire, and to have called on all the works of God to rejoice with them: on sun and moon, stars of heaven, nights and days showers and dew, frost and cold, lightnings and clouds, mountains and hills, green things upon the earth, seas and floods, fowls of the air, beasts and cattle, and children of men,—to praise and bless the Lord, and magnify Him for ever. We have no such trial as they; we have no such awful suspense as theirs, on entering the burning fiery furnace. We can neither instance their faith, nor equal their rejoicing; yet we can imitate them so far as to look abroad into this fair world, which God made "very good," while we mourn over the evil which Adam brought into it; to hold communion with what we see, while we seek Him Who is invisible; to admire it, while we abstain from it; to acknowledge God's love while we deprecate His wrath; to confess that many as are our sins, His grace is greater. Our sins are more in number than the hairs of our head, yet even the hairs of our head are all numbered by Him. He counts our sins, and, as He

counts, so He can forgive; for that reckoning, great though it be, comes to an end: but His mercies fail not, and His Son's merits are infinite.

Let us, then, on this day, dwell upon a thought which it will be a duty to carry with us through Lent,—the thought of the blessings and mercies of which our present life is made up. St. Paul said that he had all, and abounded, and was full; and this in a day of persecution. Surely if we have but religious hearts and eyes, we too must confess that our daily and hourly blessings in this life are not less than his. Let us recount some of them.

First, then, we ought to bless and praise God that we have the gift of life. By this I mean, not merely that we live, but for those blessings which are included in the idea of living. We cannot live without the means of life; and the means of life are means of pleasure. It might have been so ordered that life could not have been sustained without the use of such means as were indifferent, neither pleasant nor painful,—or of means which were even painful, as in the case of illness or disease, when we actually find that we cannot preserve life without painful remedies. Now, supposing the ordinary ways of preserving it had been what are now extraordinary—supposing food were medicine—supposing wounds or blows imparted health and strength. But it is not so. On the contrary, life consists in things pleasant: it is sustained by blessings. After the flood, God Almighty condescended to promise that there never should be such a flood

again ; that seed-time and harvest should not fail.

He might, did He so will, sustain us Christian not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of His mouth. But He has not done so. He has pledged to us those ordinary means of support which we naturally like : “ bread shall be given us ; our water shall be sure ; ” “ all these things shall be added unto us. ” He has not, indeed, promised us what the world calls its great prizes ; He has not promised us those goods, so called, of which the goodness depends on our fancy ; He has not promised us large estates, magnificent domains, houses like palaces, splendid furniture, retainers and servants, chariots and horses, rank, name, credit, popularity, power, the deference of others, the indulgence of our will, luxury, sensual enjoyments. These, on the contrary, He denies us ; and withal He declares that, showy and inviting as they are, really they are evil. But still He has promised that this shall be His rule,—that thus shall it be fulfilled to us as His ordinary Providence,—that life shall not be a burden to us, but a blessing, and shall contain more to comfort than to afflict. Angiving us as much as this, He bids us be satisfied with it ; He bids us confess that we “ have all when we have so much ; that we “ abound ” where we have enough ; He promises us food, raiment and lodging ; and He bids us, “ having food and raiment, therewith to be content. ” He bids us be content with those gifts, and withal free from care about them ; tranquil, secure, and confident *because* He has promised them ; He bids us b

sure that we shall have so much, and not be disappointed that it is no more. Such is His merciful consideration of us: He does not separate us from this world, though He calls us out of it; He does not reject our old nature when He gives us a new one; He does but redeem it from the curse, and purify it from the infection which came through Adam, and is none of His. He especially blesses the creation to our use, though we be regenerate. "Every creature of God," says the Apostle, "is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." He does not bid us renounce the creation, but associates us with the most beautiful portions of it. He likens us to the flowers with which He has ornamented the earth, and to the birds that live solitary under heaven; and makes them the type of a Christian. He denies us Solomon's royal magnificence, to unite us to the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. vi. 25-29).

Here then, surely, is a matter for joy and thank-

fulness at all seasons, and not the least at times when, with a religious forbearance, and according to the will of the Giver, not from thanklessness but from fear, we, for a while, more or less withhold from ourselves His good gifts. Let us now thank God that He has not put us into an evil world, or subjected us to a cruel master, but has given us a continual record of His own perfections in all that lies around us. Alas! it will be otherwise hereafter with those whom God puts out of His sight for ever. Their world will be evil; their life will be death; their rulers will be the devil and his angels; flames of fire and the lake of brimstone will be their meat and drink; the heaven above them will be brass; their earth will be dust and ashes; the blood in their veins will be as molten lead. Fearful thought! which it is not right to do more than glance at. Let us utter it, and pass by. Rather it is for us to rejoice that we are still in the light of His countenance, on His good earth, and under His warm sun. Let us thank Him that He gives us the fruits of the earth in their season.

Again; what a great blessing is the gift of sleep! Almighty God does not suffer us to be miserable for a long while together, even when He afflicts us; but He breaks our trials into portions, takes us out of this world ever and anon, and gives us a holyday time, like children at school, in an unknown and mysterious country.

All this, then, must be borne in mind, in reflecting on those solemn and sobering truths concerning the Christian's calling, which it is necessary often to insist upon. We live, therefore we are happy;

upon this life of ours come joys and sorrows. Still, after all, considered in ourselves, that we live; that God breathes in us; that we exist in Him; that we think and act; that we have the means of life; that we have food, and sleep, and raiment, and lodging; and that we are not lonely, but in God's Church, and are sure of brethren by the very token of our having a Father which is in heaven: so far rejoicing is the very condition of our being.

And as to seasons of sickness, or even long and habitual pain or disease, the good Lord can make up for them in His own way by extraordinary supplies of grace, as in early times He made even the torments of Christians in persecution literally pleasant to them. He who so ordered it, that even the red-hot iron did feel pleasant to the martyrs after a while, cannot fail of means to support His servants when life becomes a burden.

But, generally speaking, it is a happiness, and that to all ranks. High and low, rich and poor, have the same refreshment in their pilgrimage. Hunger is as pleasantly appeased by the low as by the high, on coarse fare as on delicate. Sleep is equally the recruiting of rich and poor. Our natural life is the type of our spiritual life; and thus, in a literal as well as higher sense, we may bless Him "Who saveth our life from destruction, and crowneth us with mercy and loving-kindness; Who satisfieth our mouth with good things, making us young and lusty as an eagle" (Ps. ciii. 4, 5).

Now, again, consider the blessings which we have in Christian brotherhood. In the beginning *woman* was made that man might not be alone.

but might have a help meet for him; and Lord promised that all who gave up this world and this world's kindred for Him, should "receive manifold more in this present time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions" (Mark x. 29).

God does not take away food and raiment when He gives grace, nor does He take away brotherhood. He removes from the world to put us in the Church. Christ finds us in the double tabernacle of a house of flesh and a house of brethren, and He sanctifies both, not pulls them down. Abraham offered his only son, and received him back again at the angel's voice. Isaac "loved Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her, and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Jacob lost Joseph, and found him governor of Egypt. Job lost all his children, but his end was more blessed than his beginning. We too, through God's mercy, whether we be young or old, whether we have many friends or few, if we be Christ's, shall all along our pilgrimage find those in whom we may live, who will love us and whom we may love, who will aid us, help us forward, and comfort us, and close our eyes.

Again; let us bless and praise God for the present peace of the Church, and the freedom of speech and action which He has vouchsafed us. There have been times, when, to be a Christian, was to be an outcast and a criminal; when to profess the faith of the saints, would have subjected us to bonds and imprisonment. Let us thank God that at present we have nothing to fear, but may serve Him zealously, "no man

bidding us." This is the blessing which we pray for in our Collects, and wonderfully has God granted it for very many years past. We pray daily that God would "give peace in our time." We pray three times a week that "those evils which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us may be brought to nought;" and "that, being hurt by no persecutions, we may evermore give thanks to God in His holy Church." We pray yearly that "the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by His governance, that His Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness;" and that He may "keep His household, the Church, in continual godliness, that through His protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Him in good works, to the glory of His name." Now all this is most wonderfully fulfilled to us at this day, praised be His great mercy! Great mercy indeed, which we forget because we are used to it; which many prophets and righteous men in the first ages of the Gospel had not, yet which we have had from our youth up. We from our youth up have lived in peace; with no persecution, no terror, no hindrance in serving God. The utmost we have had to endure is what is almost too trifling for a Christian to mention; cold looks, or contempt, or ridicule, from those who have not the heart themselves to attempt the narrow way.

The saints above are stars in heaven,—

What are the saints on earth?

Like trees they stand, whom God has given,

Our Eden's happy birth.

Faith is their fix'd unswerving root,
 Hope their unfading flower ;
 Fair deeds of charity their fruit,
 The glory of their bower.

The dew of heaven is like Thy grace,
 It steals in silence down ;
 But where it lights, the favour'd place
 By richest fruits is known.

Thou, Who hast given me eyes to see
 And love this sight so fair,
 Give me a heart to find out Thee,
 And read Thee every where.

*Services for the Sunday called Septuagesima
 the Third Sunday before Lent.*

Morning Lesson, Genesis i.

Evening Lesson, Genesis ii.

Epistle, 1 Corinth. ix. 24.

Gospel, St. Matthew xx. 1.

The Collect.—O Lord, we beseech Thee
 vourably to hear the prayers of Thy people;
 we, who are justly punished for our offences,
 be mercifully delivered by Thy goodness, for
 glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our
 viour, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and
 Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without
 Amen.

From celebrating the coming of Christ, by
 birth and manifestation to the world, the Chi
now calls our devout attention to the end and
ject of His coming.

His merciful purpose was, to restore us, th

His grace and merits, to holiness and happiness, by reforming and renewing our fallen and corrupt nature. He appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. For "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

He came not to call the righteous (not one such, however, strictly speaking, was to be found upon earth), but sinners to repentance. To lead us to repent of our sins, therefore, the Church has set apart the penitential season of Lent; and of its approach she this day begins to give us warning,—being the third Sunday before Lent, called *Septuagesima*, or more properly, perhaps, *the Sunday in Septuagesima*. The meaning of this name may be most probably explained as follows:—Forty days the Church considers as a fit space of time for penitential exercise, to turn away the wrath of God from us, in remembrance of the forty days in which the world was drowned by the flood—forty years' wandering of the Israelites, under penance, in the wilderness, for their unbelief and murmuring—in consequence of the forty days' search of the promised land, year answering to day—the forty stripes inflicted as a punishment upon offenders—and the forty days' space of repentance allowed to Nineveh, &c. Forty days, accordingly, the Church keeps as her time of *Lent*, in the spring of the year (the word *Lent* meaning *spring*), that, sowing in tears, she may reap in joy. Such days, however, she cannot keep one following another without any interruption; for the first day of every week is a festival of joy, in memory of her Saviour's resurrection. For this

reason she begins her forty days' fast forty-six days before Easter—upon Ash-Wednesday—that she may leave out the six Sundays in Lent. The first Sunday was, of course, the Sunday in the *Quadragesima* (or forty days).

Afterwards, it became a custom with some to begin their Lent *fifty* days before Easter, that, besides the Sundays, they might have a few days more of refreshment. The Sunday in that time would be called *the Sunday in Quinquagesima*, or *Quinquagesima* only. Some indulged themselves still more by beginning their fast *sixty*, and some *seventy*, days before Easter. From this came the names *Sexagesima* and *Septuagesima*, which last brings to our minds the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, the place of confusion and sin. So that it was not to make Lent a more severe fast, but to lessen it, that it was begun so early, in consideration of weaker constitutions, who were allowed to pick out forty days of fasting, mixed with days of rest and refreshment.

These three Sundays in Lent, then, make a proper introduction to Lent, strictly so called,—changing the festival robe of gladness for our Redeemer's birth, into the sackcloth of godly sorrow for the cause that brought Him down from heaven—the sin of the world. He, of His infinite love, took upon Himself to suffer and die, that, by the sacrifice of His death, He might make atonement for the dreadful evil of sin, and buy, at the price of His blood, repentance and pardon for us, that we, dying to sin and living unto righteousness, might, by the healthful sorrow of pious *penance*, mortifying sin, escape eternal punishment.

The **Collect** for the day accordingly makes penitential acknowledgment of God's justice in punishing our sins, and prays for deliverance, for the glory of His blessed name.

The **Epistle** points out our race, and the necessity of fasting and mortification, in order to run it successfully.

The **Gospel** shews us the work appointed for us in God's vineyard, looking also to the calling of the Gentiles in the end of the day, who yet, by diligent labour, may equal, in the receipt of wages, those who set out in earlier ages. But it gives not the smallest encouragement to those Christians who, by their baptism, were engaged to labour early in life, but have loitered idly all the day, and, at the close of it, only begin to work, or lament that they have not worked earlier; for so this parable has been sometimes wrongly applied.

The Sunday **Lessons**, going back from Isaiah to Genesis, discover to us the superior rank and high dignity of man upon his creation, stamped with the image of God, the divine spirit added to his earthly body and human soul, by the distinguishing favour of the gracious Creator. Made in his natural body a creature only of earth, heaven, by this more than natural grace, became his inheritance, and the garden of God's own planting was made his delightful habitation, as a pledge of that above. There all was peace and joy, with hope of higher things, before sin brought in shame, and sorrow, and death. By the mercy of Him who made us, and, of His love and pity, also redeemed us, we are created anew, that we may shake off

our sins, and put on the new man, which, in Christ Jesus, is renewed in holiness, after the image of Him that created us.

Sexagesima Sunday.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 Cor. i. 4.

IF there is one point of character more than another which belonged to St. Paul, and discovers itself in all he said and did, it was his power of sympathising with his brethren, nay, with all classes of men. He went through trials of every kind, and this was their issue, to let him into the feelings, and thereby to introduce him to the hearts, of high and low, Jew and Gentile. He knew how to persuade, for he knew where lay the perplexity; he knew how to console, for he knew the sorrow. His spirit within him was as some delicate instrument, which, as the weather changed about him, as the air was moist or dry, hot or cold, accurately marked its changes, and guided him what to do. "To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the law, as under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law; to them that were without law, as without law, that he might gain them that were without law. To the weak," he says, "became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I *might* by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 20-22).

And so, again, in another place, after having recounted his various trials by sea and land, in the bleak wilderness and the stifling prison, from friends and strangers, he adds, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. xi. 29, 30). Hence, in the Acts of the Apostles, when he saw his brethren weeping, though they could not divert him from his purpose, which came from God, yet he could not keep from crying out, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xxi. 13). And even of his own countrymen who persecuted him, he speaks in the most tender and affectionate terms, as understanding well where they stood, and what their view of the Gospel was. "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And again, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved. For I *bear them record* that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. ix. 3; x. 1, 2). And hence, so powerful was he in speech with them, whenever they were not reprobate, that even king Agrippa, after hearing a few words of St. Paul's own history, exclaimed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28). And what he was in persuasion, such he was in consolation. He himself gives this reason for his trials in the text, speaking of Almighty God's

"comforting him in all his tribulations, that he might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God."

Such was the great Apostle St. Paul, the Apostle of grace, whom we hold in especial honour in the early part of the year. At this season we commemorate his conversion; and at this season we give attention, more than ordinary, to his Epistles. And on Sexagesima Sunday we almost keep another Festival in his memory, the Epistle for that day being expressly on the subject of his trials. He was beaten, he was scourged, he was chased to and fro, he was imprisoned, he was shipwrecked; he was in this life of all men most miserable, that he might understand how poor a thing mortal life is, and might learn to contemplate and describe fitly the glories of the life immortal. "Experience," he tells us elsewhere, "worketh hope; that grace which of all others most tends to comfort and assuage sorrow. In somewhat a similar way our Lord says to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxi 31, 32). Nay, the same law was fulfilled, not only in the case of Christ's servants, but even He Himself, "who knoweth the hearts," condescended by an unspeakable mystery, to learn to strengthen the man, by the experiencing of man's infirmities. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to

God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15).

Such is one chief benefit of painful trial, of whatever kind, which it may not be unsuitable to enlarge on. "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." More or less, we all have our severe trials of pain and sorrow. If we go on for some years in the world's sunshine, it is only that troubles, when they come, should fall heavier. Such, at least, is the general rule. Sooner or later we fare as other men; happier than they, only if we learn to bear our portion more religiously; and more favoured, if we fall in with those who themselves have suffered, and can aid us with their sympathy and their experience. And then, while we profit from what they can give us, we may learn from them freely to give what we have freely received, comforting in turn others with the comfort which our brethren have given us from God.

Now, in speaking of the benefits of trial and suffering, we should, of course, never forget that these things, by themselves, have no power to make us holier or more heavenly. They make many men morose, selfish, and envious. The only sympathy they create in some minds is the wish that others should suffer with them, not they with others. Affliction, when love is away, leads a man to wish others to be as he is; it leads to repining, ill-will, hatred, rejoicing in evil. The

devils are not incited by their torments to a endeavour but that of making others devils al Such is the effect of pain and sorrow when 1 sanctified by God's saving grace. It is only wh grace is in the heart, when power from abc dwells in a man, that any thing outward or inwe turns to his salvation. Whether persecution, famine, or the sword, they as little bring the s to Christ, as they separate it from Him.] alone can work, and He can work through things. He can make the stones bread. He c feed us with every word which proceedeth fr His mouth. He could, did He so will, make calm, resigned, tender-hearted, and sympathisit without trial ; but it is His will ordinarily to do by means of trial. Even He Himself, when] came on earth, condescended to gain knowled by experience ; and what He did Himself, that] makes His brethren do.

Almighty God, while He chose worldly trial the portion of His saints, sanctified it, by f heavenly grace, to be their great benefit.] rescues them from the selfishness of worldly co fort without giving them up to the selfishness worldly pain. He brings them into pain, tl they may be like what Christ was, and may be l to think of Him, not of themselves. He brir them into trouble, that they may be near Hi When they mourn, they are more intimately His presence than they are at any other tir and they are then under God's teaching a *training* for the work of consolation towards th *brethren*.

If niggard earth her treasures hide,
 To all but labouring hands denied,
 Lavish of thorns and worthless weeds alone,
 The doom is half in mercy given,
 'To train us in our way to heaven,
 And shew our lagging souls how glory must be won.

If on the sinner's outward frame
 God hath impress'd His mark of blame,
 And even our bodies shrink at touch of light,
 Yet mercy hath not left us bare ;
 The very weeds we daily wear
 Are to Faith's eye a pledge of God's forgiving might.

And oh ! if yet one arrow more,
 The sharpest of th' Almighty's store,
 Tremble upon the string— a sinner's death—
 Art Thou not by to soothe and save,
 To lay us gently in the grave,
 To close the weary eye and hush the parting breath ?

Therefore in sight of man bereft,
 The happy garden still was left ;
 The fiery sword that guarded shew'd it too,
 Turning all ways, the world to teach,
 That though as yet beyond our reach,
 Still in its place the tree of life and glory grew.

*Services for the Sunday called Sexagesima, or the
 Second Sunday before Lent.*

Morning Lesson, Genesis iii.

Evening Lesson, Genesis vi.

Epistle, 2 Cor. xi. 19.

Gospel, St. Luke viii. 4.

The Collect.—O Lord God, Who seest that we
 put not our trust in any thing that we do ; mer-
 cifully grant that by Thy power we may be de-

fended against all adversity ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

. This morning's proper ~~Lesson~~ sets before us the source of all our miseries, in the poisoning and corrupting of our race by the fall of our first parents. From this came death, disease, and all disorder ; and our case had been, in consequence, utterly hopeless, but for the dawn of hope and mercy, even the tender mercy of our God.

This dayspring from on high visited us with that most gracious promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." In these words of *glad tidings* to the whole race of mankind, all spoken of as contained in the first pair, the Conqueror of the devil was pointed out, and the rescue of his wretched captives in consequence. The ruin was upon all, the promise of redemption to all likewise. Death was the sentence in case of disobedience ; and that blessed seed, the Son of God, made the seed of the woman, engaged to die in our stead, that by His bruises, by which are meant His sufferings and death, our sores might be healed, we might recover God's saving health, and be restored to His favour and the hope of eternal life. This blessed hope, meantime, turns all our earthly suffering and losses to spiritual good and advancement, leading on to full and final conquest over death and the grave, by the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Thus revived and raised again, we have to learn, from our fall, to walk very warily. As one recovering from deadly sickness, we must be very careful not to put ourselves

in the way of a relapse (or return of sin). Feeling our weakness, we must not lay ourselves open to danger, and must strictly use the means and course ordered to make firm and perfect our advancing health and strength. We must faithfully use the bitter medicine of repentance to kill our sins and quicken our heavenly virtue—with earnest gratitude to the divine Physician who cures by it our spiritual sickness. We have destroyed ourselves, but in Him is our help and salvation. In Him, if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Sin is the bait which he still throws out to catch us; and therefore, according to the advice of the wise son of Sirach, let us ever “flee from sin as from the face of a serpent; if thou comest too near it,” says he, “it will bite thee; the teeth thereof are as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men” (Ecclus. xxi. 1, 2). Solomon’s teaching in the same place should also be attended to by every son and daughter of Adam: “My son, hast thou sinned? do so no more, but ask pardon for thy former sins.”

To the exercise of the great duty of repentance, very well comprehended in these words, we are now in a particular manner called upon by the Church, and in this duty we should be most earnest and diligent; and, at the same time, whilst we use our most earnest endeavours, we must be upon our guard against that fatal wile of the old serpent, the king of pride, who beguiled our first parents, and who, if he cannot draw us from our duty, will tempt us to trust in and be proud of our own doings; and such an “haughty spirit goes before a fall.”

In this day's **Collect**, therefore, we renounce such temper of mind, by a sincere but very awful appeal to our Lord God; declaring that we put not our trust in ourselves or in our best doings, and praying for His merciful deliverance from all the snares of the adversary (which the word *adversity* here means); and this we beg for His sake alone, who is our strength as well as our Redeemer.

Driven out of paradise by the disobedience of our first parents, and doomed to earn our soul's bread, as well as that for our body, by the sweat of our brow, that is, by toil and travail, the **Epistle** encourages us by the example and account of the faithful and laborious works and sufferings of the great Apostle—(most humble was he all the while, giving the whole glory of his works and merits to the grace of God alone). Very far short we are of his perfection when we compare our own lives with his, whom yet we are told to imitate, following him as he followed Christ: that we may not suppose our own unfruitfulness owing to any want of help from heaven, the **Gospel** shews us that the fault is not in the seed, the Word of God, or in the Sun, the healing and life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness. The fault is in the soil, which is by nature barren, and neglected in point of culture, through want of being weeded and dressed with the needful care and labour of repentance and amendment of life.

The evening **Lesson** points out the miserable state of mankind, and the dreadful effects of spreading sin and wickedness (which, if not *rooted out*, grows up of itself rapidly increasing),

in the account of the flood, the consequence of the fall. The judgment by water is a warning and forerunner of that by fire, which shall one day, with an irresistible torrent, overwhelm the world of the ungodly and impenitent. Now, in time, let us flee from the wrath to come, by true and earnest repentance. May God overshadow us with the wings of the heavenly dove, His own Holy Spirit!

Quinquagesima Sunday.

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."—*Rom. viii. 15.*

WHEN Adam fell, his soul lost its true strength; he forfeited the inward light of God's presence, not to speak of the wrath of God which followed or was involved in His withdrawal.

The soul of man, as if faint, hungry, or sick, could no longer stand upright, but sank on the ground. Such is the state in which every one of us lies as born into the world; and Christ has come to put us back into our first state, and restore us the great gift which Adam lost in the beginning. Adam fell from his Creator's favour to be a bond-servant; and Christ has come to set us free again, to impart to us the spirit of adoption, whereby we become God's children, and again approach Him as our Father.

I say, by birth we are in a state of defect and want; we have not all that is necessary for the perfection of our nature. The Scripture signifies

this to us by many figures; sometimes calling human nature blind, sometimes hungry, sometimes unclothed, and calling the gift of the Spirit light, health, food, warmth, and raiment; all by way of teaching what our real state is, and what our gratitude should be to Him who has brought us into a new state.

For instance: "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. . . . And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Again; "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Again; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." Again; "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Rev. iii. 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Eph. v. 14; John iv. 14).

And in the book of Psalms: "They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house; and Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river. For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light." And in another psalm: "My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth Thee with joyful lips." And so

again, in the prophet Jeremiah: "I will satiate the souls of the priests with fatness; and my people shall be satisfied with My goodness. . . . I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul" (Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9; lxiii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 14, 25).

The thought of God, and nothing short of it, is the happiness of man. He alone is sufficient for the heart, Who made it. None but the Presence of our Maker can enter us; for to none besides can the whole heart, in all its thoughts and feelings, be unlocked and subjected. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things" (Rev. iii. 20; John xiv. 23; Gal. iv. 6; 1 John iii. 20).

It is this feeling of simple and absolute confidence and communion, which soothes and satisfies those to whom it is vouchsafed. "There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

This is what is meant by the peace of a good conscience; it is the habitual consciousness that our hearts are open to God, with a desire that they should be open. It is a confidence in God, from a feeling that there is nothing in us which we need be ashamed or afraid of. You will say, that no man on earth is in such a state; for we

are all sinners, and that daily. It is so; certainly we are quite unfitted to endure God's all-searching eye, to come within the reach of His glorious presence, unless there be some means of communion between Him and us. But, first, there may be degrees of this confidence in different men, though the perfection of it in none. And, again, God in His great mercy, as we all well know, has revealed to us that there is a Mediator between the sinful soul and Himself. And as His merits most wonderfully come between our sins and God's judgment, so the thought of those merits, when present with the Christian, enables him, in spite of his sins, to lift up his heart to God; and believing, as he does, that he is (to use Scripture language) in Christ, or, in other words, that he addresses Almighty God, not face to face, but in and through Christ, he can bear to submit and open his heart to God, and wish it open. For, while he is very conscious of original and actual sin, yet still a feeling of his own sincerity and earnestness is possible; and in proportion as he gains as much as this, he will be able to walk unreservedly with Christ, his God and Saviour, and desire His continual presence with him, though he be a sinner, and will wish to be allowed to make Him the one object of his heart.

Perhaps, under somewhat of this feeling, Hagar said, "Thou God seest me." It is under this feeling that holy David may be supposed to say, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try out *my reins and my heart.*" "Try me, O God, and *seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts.* Look well, if there be any

way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. xxvi. 2; cxxxix. 23, 24). And especially is it instanced in St. Paul, who seems to delight in the continual laying open of his heart to God, and submitting it to His scrutiny, and waiting for His presence upon it; or, in other words, in the joy of a good conscience. For instance; "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16; Rom. ix. 1; 2 Cor. i. 12).

It is, I say, the characteristic of St. Paul, as manifested in his Epistles, to live in the sight of Him Who "searcheth the reins and the heart;" to love to place himself before Him; and while contemplating God, to dwell on the thought of God's contemplating him.

I have been saying that our happiness consists in the thought of God—only such a thought is capable of accompanying us always and every where, for God alone can be always and every where present; and that what is commonly said about the happiness of a good conscience confirms this; for what is it to have a good conscience, when we examine the force of our words, but to be ever reminded of God by our own hearts, to

have our hearts in such a state as to be led thereby to look up to Him, and to desire His eye to be upon us through the day? It is the feeling which, in the case of holy men, follows the contemplation of Almighty God.

But, again, this sense of God's presence is not only the ground of the peace of a good conscience, but of the peace of repentance also. At first sight it might seem strange how repentance can have in it any thing of comfort and peace. The Gospel, indeed, promises to turn all sorrow into joy. It makes us take pleasure in desolateness, weakness, and contempt. "We glory in tribulations also," says the Apostle, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It destroys anxiety: "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." It bids us take comfort under bereavement: "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (Rom. v. 3, 5; Matt. vi. 34; 1 Thess. iv. 13).

But if there be one sorrow which might seem to be unmixed misery, if there be one misery left under the Gospel, the awakened sense of having abused the Gospel might have been considered that one. And, again, if there be a time when the presence of the Most High would at first sight seem intolerable, it would be then when the consciousness vividly burst upon us that we had ungratefully rebelled against Him. Yet so it is that true repentance cannot be without the thought *of God*; it has the thought of God, for it seeks

Him; and it seeks Him because it is quickened with love; and even sorrow must have a sweetness, if love be in it.

For what is it to repent, but to surrender ourselves to God for pardon or punishment; as loving His presence for its own sake, and accounting chastisement from Him better than rest and peace from the world? While the prodigal son remained among the swine, he had sorrow enough, but no repentance, remorse only; but repentance led him to rise and go to his father, and to confess his sins.

Or, again, consider St. Paul's account of the repentance of the Corinthians; there is sorrow in abundance, nay anguish, but no gloom, no dryness of spirit, no sternness. The penitents afflict themselves, but it is from the fulness of their hearts, from love, gratitude, devotion, horror of the past, desire to escape from their present selves into some state holier or more heavenly. St. Paul speaks of their "earnest desire, their mourning, their fervent mind towards him." He rejoices, "not that they were made sorry, but that they sorrowed to repentance." "For ye were made sorry," he proceeds, "after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." And he describes this "sorrowing after a godly sort" to consist in "carefulness, which it wrought in them," "clearing of themselves," "indignation," "fear," "vehement desire," "zeal," "revenge" (2 Cor. vii. 7, 9, 11); feelings, all of them, which open the heart, but end in acts or works.

On the other hand, remorse, or what the Apostle calls "the sorrow of the world," worketh death.

Instead of coming to the Fount of life, to the God of all consolation, remorseful men feed on their own thoughts. They disburden themselves to no one; to God they will not, to the world they cannot confess. The world will not attend to their confession; it cannot approach or stand by us in trouble; it leaves all our feelings buried within us. Such is our state while we live to the world, whether we be in sorrow or in joy. We do not know, perhaps, what or where our pain is; we are so used to it that we do not call it pain. Still so it is—we need a relief to our hearts, that they may be dark and sullen no longer, or that they may not go on feeding upon themselves; we need to escape from ourselves to something beyond; and much as we may wish it otherwise, and may try to make idols to ourselves, nothing short of God's Presence is our true refuge.

Life passes, riches fly away, the senses decay, the world changes, friends die. One alone is constant—One alone is true to us—One alone can be true—One alone can be all things to us—One alone can supply all our needs—One alone can form and possess us. Are we allowed to put ourselves under His guidance? Has He really made us His children, and taken possession of us by His Holy Spirit? Are we still in His kingdom of grace, in spite of our sins? The question surely is not, whether we should go, but whether He will receive us. And we trust that, in spite of our sins, He will receive us still, every one of us, if we seek His face in love unfeigned and holy fear. Let us, then, do our part, as He has done *His*, and much more. Let us say with the Psalm-

ist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26).

Sweet dove! the softest, steadiest plume
In all the sunbright sky,
Brightening in ever-changeful bloom,
As breezes change on high.

Sweet leaf! the pledge of peace and mirth,
Long sought, and lately won;
Bless'd increase of reviving earth,
When first it felt the sun.

Sweet rainbow! pride of summer days,
High set at Heaven's command;
Though into drear and dusky haze
Thou melt on either hand.

Dear tokens of a pardoning God,
We hail ye, one and all,
As when our fathers walked abroad,
Freed from their twelvemonth's thrall.

And what most welcome and serene
Dawns on the patriarch's eye,
In all th' emerging hills so green,
In all the brightening sky?

What but the gentle rainbow's gleam,
Soothing the wearied sight,
That cannot bear the solar beam,
With soft undazzling light?

Lord, if our fathers turn'd to Thee
With such adoring gaze,
Wondering frail man Thy light should see
Without Thy scorching blaze;

Where is our love, and where our hearts,
 We who have seen Thy Son,
 Have tried Thy Spirit's winning arts,
 And yet we are not won ?

*Services for the Sunday called Quinquagesim
 or the Sunday next before Lent.*

Morning Lesson, Genesis ix. 1-20.

Evening Lesson, Genesis xii.

Epistle, 1 Corinthians xiii. 1.

Gospel, St. Luke xviii. 31.

The Collect.—O Lord, Who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send Thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whatsoever liveth is counted dead before Thee : grant this for Thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Already called and urged to the exercise of repentance, and about to enter upon the potential mortifications of Lent, the Church wisely presses upon our minds the divine virtue of charity—love to God for Himself, and to men for His sake. Love lightens labour, and makes suffering itself sweet, for the sake of the beloved. Love fulfils the whole law, and all duties spring from it, and may be reduced to it. In this holy and happy temper of mind, we earnestly pray in the **Collect**, from the Divine Spirit, whom the love of God is shed abroad in

hearts. And from the love of God truly planted, the love of our neighbour, of all the human race, inseparably springs with it; for he that loveth God, by God's commandment must love his brother also.

This blessed and heavenly disposition is admirably described and recommended to us in the **Æpistle**, the contents of which we should frequently turn over in our minds, and strictly examine ourselves as to the several marks or characters of charity there laid down. It is only by our having these, that we can truly know our state towards God. Inward feelings may deceive us; but these fruits of benevolence and goodwill to our fellow-creatures, in obedience to His command, are the sure proofs of our true affection towards Him.

In the **Gospel**, we are encouraged by the constraining love of Christ, going up on His last journey to Jerusalem, to rescue us from death by dying in our stead, and announcing His sufferings and death, which He foresaw, with all their circumstances of horror, but for the love of us He willingly went to meet.

It was this which gave rise, at the season of the year when it happened, to the fast of Lent, moving us to penitential sorrow for those sins which required His painful and bloody death for their blotting out. "The days will come," He Himself foretold, "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast" (St. Mark ix. 15).

In the case of blind Bartimæus, which makes the second part of the **Gospel**, we are moved

to cry earnestly and repeatedly to Jesus, going to die for us, that He would cure the blindness of our hearts, and strengthen our begging and fainting poverty. We must cast away our filthy rags, to follow Him in the way of His cross, that by an enlightened faith we may really know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death, which is the special purpose of Lent; that by such means we may become properly fitted to be conformed to His glory at the resurrection of the dead, the joy of an everlasting Easter following the humiliation and sorrows of a Lent which only lasts for a time.

In the **Morning Lesson**, we are comforted by the renewal of God's covenant and restoration of mankind after the deluge, encouraging the hopes of His reviving mercy, after the terrors of His awful judgments. In the **Evening** we are stirred up and admonished to forsake our natural corruption, renouncing self and sin; and by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, to set out in search of a happy land, which yet we know not (for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love Him); walking by persevering obedience in the steps of our father Abraham, the example and father of all the faithful, Gentiles as well as Jews.



THE SEASON OF LENT.

O MERCIFUL Creator, hear
Our prayers to Thee devoutly bent,
Which we pour forth with many a tear
In this most holy fast of Lent.

Thou mildest Searcher of each heart,
Who know'st the weakness of our strength,
To us forgiving grace impart,
Since we return to Thee at last.

Much have we sinned, to our shame ;
But spare us, who our sins confess,
And, for the glory of Thy Name,
To our sick souls afford redress.

Grant that the flesh may be so pin'd
By means of outward abstinence,
As that the sober watchful mind
May fast from spots of all offence.

Grant this, O blessed Trinity !
Pure Unity, to this incline !
That the effects of fasts may be
A grateful recompense for Thine.

First Sunday in Lent.

"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered."—*Matt.* iv. 2.

THE season of humiliation, which goes before
Easter, lasts for forty days, in memory of our

Lord's long fast in the wilderness. Accordingly on this day, the first Sunday in Lent, we read the Gospel which gives an account of it; and in the Collect we pray Him, who for our sakes fasted forty days and forty nights, to bless our abstinence to the good of our souls and bodies.

We fast by way of penitence, and in order to subdue the flesh. Our Saviour had no need of fasting for either purpose. His fasting was unlike ours, as in its intensity, so in its object. And yet when we begin to fast, His pattern is set before us; and we continue the time of fasting till, in number of days, we have equalled His.

There is a reason for this; in truth, we must do nothing except with Him in our eye. As He it is through Whom alone we have the power to do any good thing, so unless we do it for Him it is not good. From Him our obedience comes,—towards Him it must look. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5). No work is good without grace and without love.

St. Paul gave up all things "to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is from God upon faith" (Phil. iii. 9).

Then only are our righteousnesses acceptable when they are done, not in a legal way, but in Christ through faith. Vain were all the deeds of the law, because they were not attended by the power of the Spirit. The Jews had the burden and heat of the day, and the yoke of the law, but it did not "work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But God hath reserved some better thing for

us. This is what it is to be one of Christ's little ones,—to be able to do what the Jews thought they could do, and could not; to have that within us through which we can do all things; to be possessed by His presence as our life, our strength, our merit, our hope, our crown; to become in a wonderful way His members—the instruments, or visible form, or sacramental sign, of the One Invisible Ever-Present Son of God, mystically repeating in each of us all the acts of His earthly life, His birth, consecration, fasting, temptation, conflicts, victories, sufferings, agony, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—He being all in all—we, with as little power in ourselves, as little excellence or merit, as the water in baptism, or the bread and wine in the holy communion; yet strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. These are the thoughts with which we celebrated Christmas and Epiphany; these are the thoughts which must accompany us through Lent.

Yes, even in our penitential exercises, when we could least have hoped to find a pattern in Him, Christ has gone before us to sanctify them to us. He has blessed fasting as a means of grace, in that He has fasted; and fasting is only acceptable when it is done for His sake. Penitence is mere formality, or mere remorse, unless done in love. Well, then, in the Services of this first Sunday, do we place the thought of Him before us, Whose grace must be within us, lest in our chastisements we beat the air, and humble ourselves in vain.

For what we know, Christ's temptation is but the fulness of that which, in its degree, and according to our infirmities and corruptions, takes

place in all His servants who seek Him. And if so, this surely was a strong reason for the Church's associating our season of humiliation with Christ's sojourn in the wilderness, that we might not be left to our own thoughts, and, as it were, "with the wild beasts," and thereupon despond when we afflict ourselves; but might feel that we are what we really are,—not bondmen of Satan, and children of wrath, hopelessly groaning under our burdens, confessing it, and crying out, "O wretched man!"—but sinners indeed, and sinners afflicting themselves, and doing penance for sin; but withal God's children, in whom repentance is fruitful, and who, while they abase themselves at the foot of the cross, are still Christ's soldiers, sword in hand, fighting a generous warfare, and knowing that they have that in them and upon them which devils tremble at and flee.

"He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways;" and the devil knows of this promise, for he used it in the very hour of temptation. He knows full well what our power is, and what is his own weakness. So we have nothing to fear while we remain within the shadow of the Almighty. "A thousand shall fall beside Thee, and ten thousand at Thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh Thee" (Psalm xci.).

While we are found in Christ, we are partakers of His security. He has broken the power of Satan; He has gone upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon hath He trod under His feet; and henceforth evil spirits, instead of having power over us, tremble and are affrighted at every true Christian. They know he has that

him which makes him their master; that he may, if he will, laugh them to scorn and put them to flight. They know this well, and bear it in mind in all their assaults upon him; sin alone gives them power over him; and their great object is to make him sin, knowing they have no other way of overcoming him. They try to scare him by the appearance of danger, and so to surprise him; or they approach stealthily and covertly to allure him, and so to surprise him. But, except by taking him at unawares, they can do nothing. Therefore let us be, my brethren, "not ignorant of their devices;" and as knowing them, let us watch, fast, and pray; let us keep close under the wings of the Almighty, that they may be our shield and buckler. Let us pray Him to make known to us His will, to teach us our faults, to take from us whatever may offend Him, and to lead us in the way everlasting.

And during this sacred season, let us look upon ourselves as on the Mount with Him—within the veil, hid with Him—not out of Him, or apart from Him, in Whose presence alone is life, but united in Him—learning to repent—learning to confess and to amend—learning His love and His fear—unlearning ourselves, and growing up unto Him who is our Head.

Between the porch and altar weep,
Unworthy of the holiest place,
Yet hoping near the shrine to keep
One lowly cell in sight of grace.

For fear lest sympathy should fail,
Hast thou not seen, in night-hours drear,
When racking thoughts the heart assail,
The glimmering stars by turns appear,

And from th' eternal home above
 With silent news of mercy steal ?
 So angels pause on tasks of love,
 To look where sorrowing sinners kneel.

Or if no angel pass that way,
 He, Who in secret sees, perchance
 May bid His own heart-warming ray
 Toward thee stream with kindlier glance.
 As when upon His drooping head
 His Father's light was pour'd from heaven,
 What time, unshelter'd and unfed,
 Far in the wild His steps were driven.

Services for the First Sunday in Lent.

Morning Lesson, Genesis xix. 1-30.

Evening Lesson, Genesis xxii.

Epistle, 2 Cor. vi. 1.

Gospel, St. Matthew iv. 1.

The Collect.—O Lord, Who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights ; give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

The first object of the fast in spring (called *Lent* in the Saxon language, where *Lent* means *spring*) was to fulfil our Lord's words in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew, ver. 15 : "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast." At the time of the year, accordingly, the time of the

Jewish Passover, when this Bridegroom of our souls, the true Paschal Lamb, was taken away by His yielding Himself up to the bitter and bloody death of the cross, as a sacrifice for our sins, His Church, from the very beginning, has kept a solemn fast. She would excite us, with sorrow of heart, to look by faith upon Him Whom our sins have pierced, and mourn bitterly for those transgressions which were the true cause of all His amazing sufferings and sorrows, and of His death at last.

When Lent came to be lengthened to forty days, a number very proper for repentance, our Lord's retreat and fast of forty days in the wilderness became a fit subject for thought and meditation. It furthers the object of this season, by calling us to retirement and abstinence from the vain pleasures and amusements of the world, that we may commune with our own hearts and search out our spirits, that serious thought and self-examination may bring our sins to remembrance, and persuade us to turn from them into the way of holiness and virtue. Our divine Redeemer, who conquered the devil for us, has left us an example in that respect also. We have only to fight against an enemy who has been beaten, and we shall obtain a complete victory, if we use aright the weapon which He has put into our hand, and take, as He did, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Whatever our temptation may be, we shall find the armour by which we may defend ourselves and "resist the devil," ready furnished in this storehouse, and from it we should learn matter of devout medita-

tion, as shall best suit our different trials. "Thy words," says the Psalmist, "have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee." From all sin, and from our ghostly enemies, by Thy fasting and temptation, good Lord, deliver us!

Sunday, although *in* Lent, is not properly *of* it; yet the services ordered for the several Sundays are suited to the season, and instruct and direct us in its duties. Thus, the *Collect* and the *Gospel* for this day commemorate our Lord's fasting in the wilderness, which was miraculous, and is far above our reach or full imitation, and therefore it would be presumptuous in us to aim at it. Yet we pray that we may reap the benefit of it, and in our measure use such a degree of abstinence, that, by His grace, we may conquer our corruptions, that all carnal affections (fleshly desires and passions) may die in us, and all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in us.

The *Epistle* sets before us a man of like passions with ourselves, the blessed Apostle St. Paul, together with his fellow-labourers, who conquered amidst their fiery trials by the almighty grace of Christ, which grace is given to us also, and will ever be sufficient for us, if we receive it not in vain. It will support us in all dangers, carry us through all temptations, and our Saviour's strength shall be shewn forth in our weakness. "Most gladly, therefore," said the holy Apostle, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

This is very comforting and encouraging to those who are still entrusted with that sacred *ministry*, which Christ committed at first to His

Apostles, and promised to be with, in the hands of their successors, to the end of the world. This Sunday, accordingly, introduces the ember-week of Lent, consecrating the spring of the year to God, and praying particularly for His direction and guidance in the choice and ordination of the several orders of the clergy, to whom, in their different stations, the dispensation (or giving forth) of the means of grace is committed, and in whose right discharge of their duties, the welfare of the Church and its members is very deeply interested. Most decent and proper is the appointment of the ember-days, which should, by clergy and people, be observed with fervent devotion. This day's *Epistle* plainly points to this object of the present week. It was just before our Lord entered upon His public ministry, that He kept this time of retirement and fasting in the wilderness. And His Apostles, to whom alone He gave the power of ordination, and whose successors in the administration of it the bishops are, fasted and prayed before they laid on hands, giving holy orders. This must not be done suddenly, but with very serious consideration, in the fear of God ; otherwise the bishops shall be partakers of the sins and failures of those whom they ordain.

The proper *Lessons* are particularly suitable to the penitential season.

The two great motives of repentance are *fear* and *love*. The first of these causes of repentance is sometimes called *attrition*, the fear of punishment and the vengeance of God, which shall certainly overtake the impenitent sinner. This is

fearfully pointed out in the *Morning Lesson* by the fire and brimstone which overwhelm the impure Sodomites, who are set forth an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. The other and nobler principle of repentance, springing from the love of God, called *contrition*; "and hereby know we the love of God," says St. John, and how great it was "because He laid down His life for us," having taken our nature upon Him, that He might be capable of dying for us.

Of this love, which will be the wonder of eternity, the *Evening Lesson* lays before us the most lively type in the intended sacrifice of Isaac ready and willing to die by the hand of his own father. This leads us to think of the actual, full and perfect sacrifice of God's only Son, for the love of mankind willingly bleeding and dying for sinners, to save them from death, by making atonement for their sins. And if any thing can excite in us sincere and godly sorrow for having by our sins offended such infinite love, and firm resolutions of forsaking our sins and amending our lives, according to His holy will and pleasure, it must be this constraining love of Christ. This will lead us to love much, because so much He has forgiven us, and in the spirit of penitential love to keep His commandments, and thus continue in His love, living to Him Who died for us, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness here, and in consequence live with Him hereafter in joy and happiness for ever!

Second Sunday in Lent.

"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father!"—*Genesis xxvii. 34.*

I SUPPOSE no one can read this chapter without feeling some pity for Esau. He had expected that his father would give him his blessing; but his brother was beforehand with him, and got the blessing instead. He did not know what had happened, and he came in to his father to be blessed, without any suspicion that he was not to be blessed. His father, full of amazement and distress, told him, that without knowing it—for he was blind and could not see—he had already given the blessing to his brother Jacob, and he could not recall it.

On hearing this, Esau burst out into a great and exceeding bitter cry, as the text expresses it. All his hopes were disappointed in a moment. He had built much upon this blessing. For Esau, when he was young, had committed a very great sin against God. He was his father's first-born; and in those times, as now among the rich and noble, it was a great thing to be the eldest in a family. In Esau's case these privileges were the greater, for they were the direct gift of God. Esau, as being the eldest born of his father Isaac, inherited certain rights and privileges, which Isaac, the long-expected heir of Abraham, had received from Abraham. Now Esau's sin, when he was a young man, had been this,—he parted with his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob. He thought lightly of God's great gift. How little

he thought of it, is plain by the price he tendered for it. Esau had been hunting, and he came home tired and faint. Jacob, who had remained at home, had some pottage, and Esau begged for some of it. Jacob knew the worth of the right, though Esau did not; he had faith to discern it. So, when Esau asked for pottage, Jacob said he would give it to Esau in exchange for his birthright; and Esau, caring nothing for his birthright, sold it to Jacob for the mess of pottage. This was a great sin, as being a contempt of a special gift of God, a gift which, after his father Isaac, no one in the whole world had but he.

Time went on; Esau got older, and understood more than before the value of the gift which he had thus profanely surrendered. Doubtless he would fain have got it back again if he could, but that was impossible.

Under these circumstances, as we find in the chapter which has been read in the course of to-day's service, his father proposed to give him a solemn blessing before he died. Now this blessing in those times carried great weight with it, as being of the nature of a prophecy, and it had been from the first intended for Jacob: Esau had no right to it; but perhaps he thought that in some way he should, in a certain sense, get back his birthright, or what would stand in its place. He had parted with it easily, and he hoped to retrieve it easily. Observe, he shewed no repentance for what he had done, no self-reproach; he had no fear that God would punish him. He only regretted his loss, without humbling himself; *he determined to retrace his steps as quickly*

quietly as he could. He went to hunt for venison, and dress it as savoury meat for his father, as his father bade him. And having got all ready, he came with it, and stood before his father. Then was it that he learned, to his misery, that God's gifts are not thus lightly to be treated; he had sold, he could not recover. He had hoped to have had his father's blessing, but Jacob received it instead. He had thought to regain God's favour, not by fasting and prayer, but by savoury meat, by feasting and making merry.

Such seems, on the whole, St. Paul's account of the matter, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. After having given examples of faith, he bids his Christian brethren beware lest there should be any one among them like Esau, whom he calls "a profane person;" as having thought and acted with so little of real perception of things unseen; "looking diligently," he says, "lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. xii. 15-17).

This, then, is the meaning of Esau's great and bitter cry, which at first sight we are disposed to pity. It is the cry of one who has rejected God, as God in turn has rejected him. It is the cry of one who has trifled with God's mercies, and then sought to regain them when it was all too late. It is the cry of one who has not heeded the warning, "See that ye receive not

the grace of God in vain," and who has "come short of the grace of God" (2 Cor. vi. 1). It *is* the cry foretold by the wise man, "Then *shall* they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me" (Prov. i. 28). That subtilty and keenness of his brother Jacob, by which he got before him, and took the kingdom of heaven by violence, was God's act; it was God's providence punishing Esau for former sin. Esau had sinned; he had forfeited his birthright, and he could not get it back. That cry of his, what was it like? it was like the entreaty of the five foolish virgins, when the door was shut: "Lord, Lord, open to us; but He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. xxv. 11, 12). It was like "the weeping and gnashing of teeth" of lost souls. Yes, surely, a great and bitter cry it well might be. Well may they weep and cry, as they will most largely, who have received God's grace and done despite to it.

The mournful history, then, which I have been reviewing, is a description of one who was first profane and then presumptuous. Esau was profane in selling his birthright, he was presumptuous in claiming the blessing. Afterwards, indeed, he did repent, but when it was too late.

And, I fear, such as Esau was of old time, such are too many Christians now. They despise God's blessings when they are young, and strong, and healthy; then, when they get old, or weak, or sick, they do not think of repenting; but they *think* they may take and enjoy the privileges of *the Gospel* as a matter of course, as if the sins of

former years went for nothing. And then, perhaps, death comes upon them; and then, after death, when it is too late, they would fain repent. Then they utter a great, bitter, and piercing cry to God; and when they see happy souls ascending towards heaven in the fulness of Gospel blessings, they say to their offended God, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father!"

Is it not, I say, quite a common case for men and women to neglect religion in their best days? They have been baptised, they have been taught their duty, they have been taught to pray, they know their creed, their conscience has been enlightened, they have leave to come to church. This is their birthright, the privileges of their birth of water and of the Spirit; but they sell it, as Esau did. They are tempted by Satan with some bribe of this world, and they give up their birthright in exchange for what is sure to perish, and to make them perish with it. Esau was tempted by the mess of pottage which he saw in Jacob's hands. Satan arrested the eyes of his lust, and he gazed on the pottage, as Eve gazed on the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve sold their birthright for the fruit of a tree—that was their bargain. Esau sold his for a mess of lentils—that was his. And men now-a-days often sell theirs; not, indeed, for any thing so simple as fruit or herbs, but for some evil gain or other, which at the time they think worth purchasing at any price; perhaps for the enjoyment of some particular sin, or more commonly for the indulgence of general carelessness and spiritual sloth, because they do not like a

strict life, and have no heart for God's
And thus they are profane persons, for t
spise the great gift of God.

And then, when all is done and over, an
souls sold to Satan, they never seem to
stand that they *have* parted with their birth
They think that they stand just where the
before they followed the world, the flesh, an
devil; and that when they choose to be
more decent, or more religious, they have all
privileges just as before. Like Samson,
propose to go out as at other times before
shake themselves. And like Esau, instead
penting for the loss of the birthright, they
as a matter of course, for the blessing.
went out to hunt for venison gaily, and pro
brought it to his father. His spirits were
his voice was cheerful. It did not strike
that God was angry with him for what had p
years ago. He thought he was as sure c
blessing as if he had *not* sold the birthright.

And then, alas, the truth flashed upon
he uttered a great and bitter cry, when i
too late. It would have been well had he u
it before he came for the blessing, not aft
He repented when it was too late—it had
well if he had repented in time. So I say o
sons who have in any way sinned. It is goo
them not to forget that they have sinned.
good that they should lament and deplore
past sins. Depend upon it, they will wail
them in the next world, if they wail not
*Which is better, to utter a bitter cry no
then?—then, when the blessing of eternal*



refused them by the just Judge at the last day, or now, in order that they may gain it? Let us be wise enough to have our agony in this world, not in the next. If we humble ourselves now, God will pardon us then. We cannot escape punishment here or hereafter; we must take our choice, whether to suffer and mourn a little now, or much then.

Would you see how a penitent should come to God? turn to the parable of the prodigal son. He, too, had squandered away his birthright, as Esau did. He, too, came for the blessing, like Esau. Yes; but how differently he came! he came with deep confession and self-abasement. He said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants:" but Esau said, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." The one came for a son's privileges, the other for a servant's drudgery. The one killed and dressed his venison with his own hand, and enjoyed it not; for the other, the fatted calf was prepared, and the ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, and the best robe; and there was music and dancing.

These are thoughts, I need hardly say, especially suited to this season. From the earliest times down to this day, these weeks before Easter have been set apart every year for the particular remembrance and confession of our sins. From the first age downward, not a year has passed but Christians have been exhorted to reflect how far they have let go their birthright, as a prepa-

ration for their claiming the blessing. At Christmas we are born again with Christ; at Easter we keep the eucharistic feast. In Lent, by penance we join the two great sacraments together. Are you, my brethren, prepared to say,—is there any single Christian alive who will dare to profess,—that he has not, in greater or less degree, sinned against God's free mercies bestowed on him in baptism without, or rather against, his deserts? Who will say that he has so improved his birth-right, that the blessing is his fit reward, without either sin to confess, or wrath to deprecate? See then, the Church offers you this season for the purpose. "Now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation." Now it is that, God being your helper, you are to attempt to throw off from you the heavy burden of past transgression, to reconcile yourselves to Him who has once already imparted to you His atoning merits, and you have already profaned them.

And for those who have in any grievous way sinned or neglected God, I recommend such persons never to forget they *have* sinned; if they forget it not, God in mercy *will* forget it. I recommend them every day, morning and evening to fall on their knees, and say, "Lord, forgive me my past sins." I recommend them to pray God to visit their sins in this world, rather than in the next. I recommend them to look on all pain and sorrow which comes on them as a *punishment* for what they once were, and to take it patiently on that account, nay, joyfully, as giving them a hope that God is punishing them here *instead of hereafter*. Let them not cease to pray

under all circumstances, that God will pardon them, and give them back what they have lost. And thus proceeding, through God's grace, they will gain it; and Esau's great and bitter cry will not be heard from them.

We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss
For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;
Thus, Esau like, our Father's blessing miss,
Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown.

Our faded crown, despis'd and flung aside,
Shall on some brother's brow immortal bloom:
No partial hand the blessing may misguide,
No flattering fancy change our Monarch's doom;

His righteous doom, that meek, true-hearted love
The everlasting birthright should receive,
The softest dews drop on her from above,
The richest green her mountain-garland weave.

Services for the Second Sunday in Lent.

Morning Lesson, Genesis xxvii.

Evening Lesson, Genesis xxxiv.

Epistle, 1 Thessalonians iv. 1.

Gospel, St. Matthew xv. 21.

The Collect.—Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The exercises of Lent are a combat of the spirit against the flesh, that may be subdued to the spirit. To this we prayed in the Collect for Sunday last by our Saviour's fasting and victory over the devil in the wilderness; and the Collect for this day leads us into the most hopeful way of coming off victorious in the combat against sin and blood, and all the spirits of darkness. We must distrust ourselves, under a deep sense of our sins and weaknesses, and place our whole trust and confidence in that Almighty arm, which can protect and strengthen us, even Jesus Christ, the arm of the Lord, Who is our strength as our Redeemer.

His divine instruction, given by His Apostle in the Epistle, teacheth us so to walk as to please God, and never to slacken our pace, but to go forward with steady step and growing haste, till we arrive at the everlasting joy of our journey's end. But here our Lord's command is particularly seasonably pressed upon us, in order that we may obtain that holiness without which no man can see the Lord in happiness. We must, therefore, according to His express command, preserve our minds and bodies in the strictest purity and integrity. The conquest over "the sinful lusts of the flesh" is the great purpose of Lent and of the fast. "I was fasting for three weeks," says the Lord, "and *flesh* and *wine* came not within me." But however we may do, in the different circumstances and situations of life, as to outward abstinence, we must totally conquer the impulses of fornication, drunkenness, and



deadly sin. In this kind of abstinence from flesh and wine, we must keep a perpetual Lent. If any seed of these be suffered to take root and grow, in vain do we pretend to keep the spring fast by the strictest abstinence in other respects.

This, our diseased daughter as it may be called, the animal part of our nature, weak by Adam's fall, of which the devil, in consequence of that first conquest, is apt to take possession and grievously torment us, is strikingly shewn forth by the case of the Canaanitish woman's distracted child in the *Gospel*. And the way to its cure and restoration to saving health is pointed out in the mother's earnest prayers and persevering cries, with deep humility and firm trust, to the merciful Jesus. Hence we are taught whither to fly for that help and cure which we have not in our own power or means of getting, and can only find in our Divine Almighty Saviour, Son of God, as well as Son of David, being God and man in one person. Although He may sometimes seem to refuse our most necessary petitions, and delay to grant what we most earnestly beg, yet it is only to improve our patience, and bring us to the temper that is fitted to receive His gift. For we may be sure that He will not finally deny the request of those who, after the example of this afflicted mother, continue to call upon Him *faithfully*.

But the cries of mere flesh and nature springing from a sensual mind, like those of Esau, whose affecting case is read as a warning to us in the *Morning Lesson*, He will not hear. If through profaneness like his, we make light of the priesthood, and means of grace appointed to

secure the blessings of our heavenly birthright, we may at length, in the time of our extremity find that there remains no blessing for us. *Esau* found that his father would not repent of *the* settlement which he had made, nor give him *any* share in the inheritance, although he *sought it* carefully with tears. Such may be the sad end of the sorrow of ungodly sinners, when their sins have made them utterly unfit for happiness, which all men naturally desire. When the time in which they might have become holy and virtuous is past, they may cry and weep in vain. "Then shall they call upon Me," says God, "but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. i.). Now, therefore, while the day of salvation lasteth, let us hear, learn, and practise His kind command, with His most merciful promise upon our obedience. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah lv. 6, 7).

But while we constantly call upon God, and seek Him so far as He may be found of us, we must join with our prayers holy prudence and watchfulness. If we would be safe from sin, we must keep ourselves from temptation; if we would keep ourselves pure, we must be upon our guard against the vanities of the world, which are the *baits and snares* that the devil lays to entrap and

catch the unwary. To this purpose, we are warned in the *Evening Lesson*, by the case of the unguarded Dinah, and the dreadful consequences of her going abroad to see and be seen, to give and receive deadly poison. "O turn away mine eyes," we should often say, "lest they behold vanity." "*Watch and pray*," said our divine Keeper, "that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." May the divine Spirit guide and guard us!

Third Sunday in Lent.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. viii. 9.

As time goes on, and Easter draws nearer, we are called upon, not only to mourn for our sins, but especially over the various sufferings which Christ our Lord and Saviour underwent on account of them. Why is it, my brethren, that we have so little feeling on the matter as we commonly have? Why is it that we are used to let the season come and go just like any other season, not thinking more of Christ than at other times, or, at least, not feeling more?

Am I not right in saying that this is the case? and if so, have I not cause for asking why it is the case? We are not moved when we hear of the bitter passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for us. We neither bewail our sins which caused it, nor have any sympathy with it. We do not suffer

with Him. If we come to church, we hear, and then we go away again, not distressed at all ; or if distressed, only for the moment. And many do not come to church at all ; and to them, of course, this holy and solemn time is like other times. They eat, and drink, and sleep, and rise up, and go about their business and their pleasure, just as usual. They do not carry the thought of Him Who died for them along with them,—with them wherever they are,—with them “whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do.” They in no sense “live,” to use St. Paul’s words, “by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved them, and gave Himself for them.”

This, also, cannot be denied. Yet if it be so, that the Son of God came down from heaven, put aside His glory, and submitted to be despised, cruelly treated, and put to death by His own creatures,—by those whom He had made, and was then upholding in life and being,—is it reasonable that so great an event should not move us ? Does it not stand to reason that we must be in a very irreligious state of mind, unless we have some little gratitude, some little sympathy, some little love, some little awe, some little self-reproach, some little self-abasement, some little repentance, some little desire of amendment, in consequence of what He has done and suffered for us ? Or rather, may not so great a Benefactor demand of us some overflowing gratitude, keen sympathy, fervent love, profound awe, bitter self-reproach, earnest repentance, eager desire and longing after a new heart ? Who can deny all this ? Why, *then*, my brethren, is it not so ? Why are things

with us as they are? Alas! I sorrowfully foretell that time will go on, and Passion-tide, and Good-Friday, and Easter-day, will pass by, and the weeks after it, and many of you will be just where you were—not at all nearer heaven, not at all nearer Christ in your hearts and lives, not impressed lastingly or savingly with the thought of His mercies and your own sins and demerits.

But why is this? Why do you so little understand the Gospel of your salvation? Why are your eyes so dim, and your ears so hard of hearing? Why have you so little faith? so little of heaven in your hearts? For this one reason, my brethren, if I must express my meaning in one word, because you so little *meditate*. You do not meditate, and therefore you are not impressed. What is meditating on Christ? It is simply this, thinking habitually and constantly of Him and of His deeds and sufferings. It is to have Him before our minds as One whom we may contemplate, worship, and address, when we rise up, when we lie down, when we eat and drink, when we are at home and abroad, when we are working, or walking, or at rest, when we are alone, and again when we are in company; this is meditating.

And by this, and nothing short of this, will our hearts come to feel as they ought. We have stony hearts, hearts as hard as the high-ways; the history of Christ makes no impression on them. And yet, if we would be saved, we must have tender, sensitive, living hearts; our hearts must be broken, must be broken up like ground, and dug, and watered, and tended, and cultivated, till

they become as gardens, gardens of Eden, acceptable to our God, gardens in which the Lord God may walk and dwell; filled, not with briars and thorns, but with all sweet-smelling and useful plants, with heavenly trees and flowers. The dry and barren waste must burst forth into springs of living water. This change must take place in our hearts, if we would be saved; in a word, we must have what we have not by nature, faith and love; and how is this to be effected, under God's grace, but by godly and practical meditation through the day?

St. Peter describes what I mean, when he says, speaking of Christ, "Whom having not seen ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Christ is gone away; He is not seen; we never saw Him; we only hear and read of Him. It is an old saying. "Out of sight, out of mind." Be sure, so it *will* be, so it *must* be, as regards our blessed Saviour, unless we make continual efforts all through the day to think of Him, His love, His precepts, His gifts, His promises. We must recall to mind what we read in the Gospels and in holy books about Him; we must bring before us what we have heard in church; we must pray God to enable us to do so, to bless the doing so, and to make us do so in a simple-minded, sincere, and reverential spirit. In a word, we must meditate, for all this is meditation; and this even the most unlearned person can do, and will do, if he has a will to do it.

Now of such meditation, or thinking over

Christ's deeds and sufferings, I will say two things; the first of which might be too plain to mention, except that, did I not mention it, I might seem to forget it, whereas I grant it. It is this; that such meditation is not at all pleasant at first. I know it; people will find it very irksome, and their minds will gladly slip away to other subjects. True: but consider, if Christ thought your salvation worth the great sacrifice of voluntary sufferings for you, should not you think (what is your own concern) your own salvation worth the slight sacrifice of learning to meditate upon those sufferings? Can a less thing be asked of you, than, when He has done the work, that you should only have to believe in it, accept it?

And my second remark is this: that it is only by slow degrees that meditation is able to soften our hard hearts, and that the history of Christ's trials and sorrows really move us. It is not once thinking of Christ, or twice thinking of Christ, that will do it. It is by going on quietly and steadily, with the thought of Him in our mind's eye, that by little and little we shall gain something of warmth, light, life, and love. We shall not perceive ourselves changing. It will be like the unfolding of the leaves in spring. You do not see them grow; you cannot, by watching, detect it. But every day, as it passes, has done something for them; and you are able, perhaps, every morning, to say that they are more advanced than yesterday. So is it with our souls; not, indeed, every morning, but at certain periods, we are able to see that we are more alive and religious than we were,

though during the interval we were not conscious that we were advancing.

There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,
 None loves them best. O vain and selfish sigh !
 Out of the bosom of His love He spares—
 The Father spares the Son, for thee to die ;
 For thee He died—for thee He lives again :
 O'er thee He watches in His boundless reign.

Thou art as much His care as if beside
 Nor man nor angel liv'd in heaven or earth :
 Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide,
 To light up worlds or wake an insect's mirth :
 They shine and shine with unexhausted store—
 Thou art thy Saviour's darling—seek no more.

Services for the Third Sunday in Lent.

Morning Lesson, Gen. xxxix.

Evening Lesson, Gen. xlii.

Epistle, Ephes. v. 1.

Gospel, St. Luke xi. 14.

The Collect.—We beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Engaged in the hard, and, to flesh and blood, mortifying and painful duties of Lent, we must, by the hearty desires of prayer and humble supplication, call in the strength of the Omnipotent (All-powerful) God to help us in the spiritual combat. Many are our adversaries, headed by

our great adversary the devil; but against his wiles and assaults, we pray for the sure defence of His right hand Who overcame him in the wilderness, during His forty days' fast, and gloriously triumphed over him in His shameful and painful cross. He fasted and was tempted, as well as suffered and died for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps; and if we do so, we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Such is the spirit and meaning of this day's excellent **Collect**,—excellent as indeed every one of the **Collects** is.

The **Epistle** powerfully stirs up our love and duty to our Redeemer, in return to that wonderful love of His, which caused Him willingly to give up Himself to death for us, to procure, by His sacrifice of infinite value, the Divine favour and good will towards us, who were otherwise loathsome and abominable in His sight by our corrupt nature. Our Lord's life no man could take from Him; for although He condescended to become, for our sakes, mortal man, yet He was the Immortal God, Almighty also, and in a moment could have sent the whole creation back into nothing. Of choice, therefore, and not of necessity, He submitted to death, out of love to us. And that His sacrifice might appear to be His free-will offering, before He gave Himself into the hands of His enemies, and while He was under no restraint, He offered the sacrifice of Himself, and none but He Himself could offer it, being Priest as well as Sacrifice. This He did, when He celebrated that most divine service, which He instituted to be a lasting memorial of His death and

sacrifice. Under the types of bread and wine, He offered Himself to die upon the cross, a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. His words are express: "This is My body, which is given for you." "This is My blood which is shed for you." His death, which was the actual sacrifice and ransom, followed upon this free-offering of Himself; but it was His willing mind that was the incense which perfumed it, making it divinely acceptable and well-pleasing to God, as a sweet-smelling savour. Thus, of His infinite love, He gave Himself an offering and sacrifice to God for us, offered in the Eucharist, and slain upon the cross. But He gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Without this purity or holiness, as the fruit of His death and purchase, it is vain to look for salvation through Him. He is indeed the Redeemer of all, having tasted death for every man; but He is the Saviour of all those only who obey Him. Agreeably, therefore, to the sacrifice of His death commemorated in the holy Eucharist, we must present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, mortified to all the sinful lusts of the flesh, all carnal affections dying in us, and all things belonging to the spirit living and growing in us. Great is the deceit that we put upon ourselves, if we hope to be saved while we hold any fellowship with the works of darkness. Awakened from the sleep of sin and sloth, we must walk and work as *children of the light and of the day, under the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that we may obtain the light of everlasting life.*

Our Divine Redeemer, the light of the world, who came to destroy the works of the devil, the prince of darkness, shewed His power, as we read in the *Gospel*, by taking from him the dominion he had usurped over the bodies as well as the souls of his slaves, and by curing the diseases which he was permitted to inflict; in which miracles the finger of God most plainly appeared. We are, therefore, filled with horror at the obstinate unbelief of those who unpardonably blasphemed the work of God and the operation of the Divine Spirit, by calling it, with the greatest degree of malice, the work of the evil spirit, the devil. This was the greatest and most desperate degree of malicious wickedness, and shews how far the indulgence of evil passions in the heart may at length lead us. And therefore "take heed, brethren," as the Holy Ghost warns us by the Apostle, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews iii. 12, 13).

To keep far away from such danger, earnestly and with the ears of our heart, let us hear the word of God, and keep it firmly fixed there, fruitful in good thoughts, words, and deeds. "Blessed are they that [thus] hear the word of God and keep it."

In this warfare against flesh and blood, as well as against all the powers of darkness, the *Morning Lesson* encourages us, by the glorious conquest of the youthful Joseph in a most dangerous combat against the "lusts of the flesh" and the

devil. He was firm, sheltered by the divine strength of his heart, which led him to say "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

In the **Evening Lesson**, we read of his advancement to the government of Egypt, after his suffering and humiliation. This is a lively type of our Saviour's exaltation to the right hand of the Father, in that human nature which was laid so low in death and the grave, taken from prison, and raised to be a Prince and a Saviour, the Governor and support of the whole world; to Whom alone we must go for spiritual food, that our souls famish not, that we may live and not die. He is Himself the bread of life, and give us Himself in a mystery of love, to be our spiritual food and support, even in that divine institution in which we plead His death for our spiritual life, and bringing repentance with us receive in it remission of sins. "Take, eat," He graciously said; "drink ye all of this." His body and blood, bread and wine, filled with divine virtue, strengthening and refreshing our souls, as by their natural virtue, they strengthen and refresh our bodies.

Lord, evermore give us this bread, the meat that never perisheth, but endureth unto everlasting life. Here make Thyself known to us, as Joseph made himself known unto his brethren, pardon our sins, and receive us in mercy.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

THIS is called the SUNDAY OF REFRESHMENT ; for the **Gospel** tells us of Christ's miraculous feeding and satisfying the hungry souls that hunger after Him and His doctrine ; and the **Epistle** tells us of a Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and a joyous place, to which we, as children, are heirs. Thus holy Church mixes joy and comfort with our sorrows and afflictions.

" Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother ; and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."—*Genesis* xlii. 30.

" There stood no man with them, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren."—*Genesis* xlv. 1.

When Nature tries her finest touch,
Weaving her vernal wreath,
Mark ye how close she veils her round,
Not to be trac'd by sight or sound,
Nor soil'd by ruder breath.

Who ever saw the earliest rose
First open her sweet breast ?
Or, when the summer's sun goes down,
The first soft star in evening's crown
Light up her gleaming crest ?

Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
On features wan and fair ;
The gazing eye no change can trace ;
But look away a little space,
Then turn, and, lo ! 'tis there !

But there's a sweeter flower than e'er
Blush'd on the rosy spray ;
A brighter star, a richer bloom,
Than e'er did western heaven illumine
At close of summer day.

'Tis Love, the last best gift of Heaven ;
Love gentle, holy, pure ;
But, tenderer than a dove's soft eye,
The searching sun, the open sky,
She never could endure.

Even human love will shrink from sight
Here in the coarse rude earth ;
How, then, should rash intruding glance
Break in upon *her* sacred trance,
Who boasts a heavenly birth ?

So still and secret is her growth,
Ever the truest heart,
Where deepest strikes her kindly root,
For hope or joy, for flower or fruit,
Least knows its happy part.

God only and good angels look
Behind the blissful screen ;
As when, triumphant o'er His woes,
The Son of God by moonlight rose,
By all but Heaven unseen.

As when the holy maid beheld
Her risen Son and Lord :
Thought has not colours half so fair,
That she to paint that hour may dare—
In silence best ador'd.

The gracious Dove that brought from Heav
The earnest of our bliss,
Of many a chosen witness telling,
On many a happy vision dwelling,
Sings not a note of this.

So, truest image of the Christ,
Old Israel's long-lost son,
What time with sweet forgiving cheer
He call'd his conscious brethren near,
Would weep with them alone.

He could not trust his melting soul
But in his Maker's sight;
Then why should gentle hearts and true
Bare to the rude world's withering view
Their treasure of delight?

No; let the dainty rose awhile
Her bashful fragrance hide;
Rend not her silken veil too soon;
But leave her, in her own soft noon,
To flourish and abide.

Services for the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Morning Lesson, Genesis xliii.

Evening Lesson, Genesis xlv.

Epistle, Gal. iv. 21.

Gospel, St. John vi. 1.

The Collect.—Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The time of Lent is the time of penance—that is, of penitential judging and condemning ourselves for our sins now, so as that we may escape the final judgment and condemnation by Almighty God in the last great day. So we pray, in the penitential **Collect** for this day, the middle of the season, commonly called Mid-Lent Sunday.

While we humbly and sorrowfully confess our sinfulness, and that for our evil deeds we do most justly deserve to be punished, yet, sincerely repenting, and, by a new and better life, returning to our Lord God, we comfort ourselves with the hope of His pardoning grace and mercy. This holds out refreshment to duly humbled sinners; and therefore this Sunday has also been called the **SUNDAY OF REFRESHMENT**.

The **Æpistle**, accordingly, sweetens our weary pilgrimage in this wilderness of sin and sorrow, by raising our eye to our heavenly city, Jerusalem, the city of peace and joy, which is above, and refreshing us with the comforting hope of being delivered from the Babylon of this world's confusion into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The **Gospel**, by the loaves miraculously multiplied to feed the hungry, more directly leads us to put our firm trust in Jesus, whose compassion never fails. We must trust to His tender care for the support of our fainting and hungry souls in this dry and barren land. While we follow Him, we need fear no evil. He will prepare a table for us in the midst of our enemies; He will strengthen and refresh us with that heavenly food which shall preserve both our souls and bodies unto everlasting life. He will give us that divine nourishment, of which this wondrous miracle gave Him occasion to speak, to our great and endless comfort.

*Most refreshing are the **Lessons** also, by the affecting history of Joseph and his brethren, and their hitherto sorrowing father, the venerable pa-*

triarch Jacob, who was overwhelmed with joy at hearing that he should again see and embrace his son, whom he believed to be dead.

So may the devout soul spiritually be filled with joy by embracing Jesus in the blessed Eucharist, Who was actually dead, but is alive again, and invites us to come and see Him when we die. When He shall send to bring us to Himself, we shall go with joy, the world while we lived in it having been crucified to us, and we unto the world, if we have kept ourselves unspotted from it, or overcome our sins by timely and true repentance. In that case, throwing ourselves into the arms of His mercy, stretched out upon the cross to receive us, we shall have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

His presence is the sun and glory of Paradise; and with the promise, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," He gave life to the suffering penitent that hung by His side. There, under His life-giving rays, all the happy souls departed from the beginning of the world shine more and more unto the perfect day. Then their bliss shall be made full, and they shall be completely glorified in body as well as in soul, and led by Him that redeemed them with His most precious blood into glory everlasting in the heaven of heavens, the blessed vision of the all-glorious Trinity; to see and enjoy their Saviour in the glory of the Father, without end, infinitely greater than all that we can conceive. But such refreshing thoughts and hopes arise without departing from the service of this day, half-way through Lent to Easter.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—*2 Cor. viii. 9.*

BEFORE the Passover, the Jews numbered fourteen days, and then the Feast came. It was to be the fourteenth day of the month, at even; and to mark the beginning of that period more distinctly, it was made the beginning of the month that is, the first month of the year.

We, then, if our Easter answers to the Passover, as substance answers to shadow, may well account that from this day, which is fourteen days before Easter, a more sacred season begins. And as our Church seems to have determined it, since from this day, which is called PASSION SUNDAY, the character of the services changes. Henceforth they have more immediate reference to Him whose death and resurrection we are soon to commemorate.

The first weeks in Lent are spent in repentance, though with the thought of Him with whom alone can give grace and power to our penitential exercises: the last, without excluding repentance, are more especially consecrated to the thought of those sufferings whereby grace and power were purchased for us.

The history of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Dinah Jacob's daughter, and of Joseph in Potiphar's house; the account of our Lord's temptation, and the parable of the man out of whom the evil spirit went, and returned sevenfold, which have been read on Sundays

this season,—may fitly be called penitential subjects; and of the same character have been the Epistles.

On the other hand, to-day's Epistle speaks of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement; while the Gospel tells us of His Divinity, He being that same God who, as the first morning Lesson relates, called Himself in the bush, "I am that I am." And so, again, next Sunday's Epistle is also upon our Lord's Divinity and voluntary Humiliation; and one of the Lessons and the Gospel contain the sacred narrative of His Passion and Death. The other second Lesson is also on the subject of His Humiliation, from St. Paul. And further, all four Lessons of to-day and next Sunday relate to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, which is the type of our redemption.

I will now say a few words upon the voluntary self-abasement of Christ, to suggest to you thoughts which you ought, indeed, to bear about you at all times, but especially at this most holy season of the year,—thoughts which will, in their poor measure (please God), prepare you for seeing Christ in heaven, and in the mean while will prepare you for seeing Him in His Easter Festival. Easter-Day comes but once a year; it is short like other days. Oh, that we may make much of it, that we may make the most of it, that we may enjoy it! Oh, that it may not pass over like other days, and leave us no fragrance after it to remind us of it!

Come, then, my brethren, at this time, before the solemn days are present, and let us review some of the privations of the Son of God made

man, which should be your meditation through these holy weeks.

And chiefly, He seems to speak to the poor. He came in *poverty*. St. Paul says, in the text "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Let not the poor suppose that their hardships are their own only, and that no one else ever felt them. The Most High God, God the Son, Who had reigned with the Father from everlasting, supremely blessed, He, even He, became a poor man, and suffered the hardships of the poor.

What are their hardships? I suppose such as these:—that they have bad lodging, bad clothing, not enough to eat, or of a poor kind; that they have few pleasures or amusements, that they are despised, that they are dependent upon others for their living, and that they have no prospects for the future.

Now, how was it with Christ, the Son of the living God? Where was He born? In a stable. I suppose not many men suffer an indignity so great: born, not in quiet and comfort, but among the brute cattle. And what was His first cradle, if I may so call it? a manger. Such were the beginnings of His earthly life; nor did His condition mend as life went on. He says, on one occasion, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head" (Luke ix. 58). He had no home. He was, when He began to preach, what now would be called with contempt a

grant. These are persons who are obliged to sleep where they can; such, in good measure, seems to have been our blessed Lord. We hear of Martha, who was hospitable to Him, and of others; but though little is told us, He seems, from what is told, to have lived a rougher life than any village-peasant. He was forty days in the wilderness: where do you think He slept then? in caves of the rock. And who were His companions then? worse companions even than those He was born among. He was born in a cave; He passed forty nights in a cave; but on His birth, at least they were tame beasts whom He was among—the ox and the ass. But during His forty days' temptation, He "was with the wild beasts." Those caverns in the wilderness are filled with fierce and poisonous creatures. There Christ slept; and doubtless, but for His Father's unseen arm, and His own sanctity, they would have fallen upon Him.

Again, cold is another hardship which sensibly afflicts us. This, too, Christ endured. He remained whole nights in prayer upon the mountains. He rose before day, and went into solitary places to pray. He was on the sea at night.

Heat is a suffering which does not afflict us much in our country, but is very formidable in the eastern parts, where our Saviour lived. Men keep at home when the sun is high, lest it should harm them; yet we read of His sitting down on Jacob's well at mid-day, being wearied with His journey.

Observe this, also, to which I have already referred: He was constantly journeying during His

ministry, and journeying on foot. Once He went into Jerusalem, to fulfil a prophecy.

Again, he endured hunger and thirst. He was athirst at the well, and asked the Samaritan man to give Him water to drink. He was in the wilderness, when He fasted forty days and nights; another time, when actively engaged in His work of mercy, He and His disciples had no time to eat bread (Mark vi. 31). And, indeed, working about as He did, He seldom could have had more than a certain of a meal. And what was the kind of food He lived on? He was much in the neighbourhood of an inland sea, or lake, called the Sea of Gennesareth, or Tiberias; and He and His Apostles lived on bread and fish, as sparely as poor men have now, or sparer. We have seen on one well-known occasion, of five barley loaves and two small fishes. After His resurrection, He provided for His Apostles a fire, and fish thereon, and bread—as it would seem, their daily fare (John xxi. 9).

Yet it deserves notice, that, in spite of poverty and penury, He and His were in the custom of giving something to the poor notwithstanding. He did not allow themselves to make the most of the little they had. When the traitor Judas rose up and went out to betray Him, and Jesus spoke to him, some of the Apostles thought that He was giving directions about alms to the poor; this shews His practice.

And He was, as need scarcely be added, entirely dependent on others. Sometimes, as I have seen, pious persons ministered to Him of their substance (Luke viii. 3). He lived, in His

blessed words, like the ravens, whom God feeds, or like the grass of the field, which God clothes.

Need I add, that He had few pleasures, few recreations? it is hardly in place to speak on such a topic in the case of One Who came from God, and Who had other thoughts and ways than we have. Yet there are innocent enjoyments which God gives us here to counterbalance the troubles of life; our Lord was exposed to the trouble, and might have taken, also, its compensation; but He refrained. It has been observed that He is never spoken of as mirthful; we often read of His sighing, groaning, and weeping. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Now let us proceed to other greater sufferings, which He took on Himself when He became poor. Contempt, hatred, and persecution from the world was one of these. Even in His infancy Mary had to fly with Him into Egypt to hinder Herod from killing Him. When He returned, it was not safe to dwell in Judea; and He was brought up at Nazareth, a place of evil name, where the holy Virgin had been when Gabriel the Angel came to her. I need not say how He was set at nought and persecuted by the Pharisees and priests when He began to preach, and had again and again to flee for His life, which they were bent on taking.

Another great suffering from which our Lord did not withdraw Himself was, what, in our case, we call bereavement,—the loss of relations or friends by death. This, indeed, He could hardly sustain literally, Who had but one earthly near *relation*, and so few friends; but even this afflic-

tion He tasted for our sakes. Lazarus was His friend, and He lost him. He knew, indeed, that He could restore him, and He did. Yet still He bitterly lamented him, for whatever reason, so that the Jews said, "Behold how He loved him!" But a greater and truer bereavement, as far as we dare speak of it, was His original act of humiliation itself, in leaving His heavenly glory and coming down on earth. This, of course, is a great mystery to us from beginning to end; still, He certainly vouchsafes to speak, through His Apostle, of His "emptying Himself" of His glory; so that we may fairly and reverently consider it as an unspeakable and wondrous bereavement, which He underwent in being for the time, as it were, disinherited, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

O Lord my God, do Thou Thy holy will;
I will lie still,
I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm,
And break the charm
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest.

Wild Fancy, peace! thou must not me beguile
With thy false smile;
I know thy flatteries and thy cheating ways:
Be silent, Praise!
Blind guide with syren voice, and blinding all
That hear thy call.

Come, Self-devotion, high and pure,
Thoughts that in thankfulness endure;
Though dearest hopes are faithless found,
And dearest hearts are bursting round.
Come, Resignation, spirit meek,
And let me kiss thy placid cheek,
And read in thy pale eye serene
Their blessing, who by faith can wean

Their hearts from sense, and learn to love
God only, and the joys above.

And there are souls that seem to dwell
Above this earth ; so rich a spell
Floats round their steps where'er they move,
From hopes fulfilled and mutual love.
Such,—if on high their thoughts are set,
Nor in the stream the source forget,
If prompt to quit the bliss they know,
Following the Lamb where'er He go,
By purest pleasures unbeguil'd,
To idolise or wife or child,—
Such wedded souls our God shall own
For faultless virgins round His throne.

Thus every where we find our suffering God,
And where He trod
May set our steps ; the cross on Calvary,
Uplifted high,
Beams on the martyr-host, a beacon-light
In open fight.

To the still wrestlings of the lonely heart
He doth impart
The virtue of His midnight agony,
When none was nigh,
Save God and one good angel, to assuage
The tempest's rage.

Mortal ! if life smile on thee, and thou find
All to thy mind,
Think Who did once from Heaven to hell descend
Thee to befriend :
So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
Thy best, thine all.

“ O Father ! not my will, but Thine be done ; ”
So spake the Son.
Be this our charm, mellowing earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys ;
That we may cling for ever to Thy breast
In perfect rest !

Services for the Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Morning Lesson, Exodus iii.

Evening Lesson, Exodus v.

Epistle, Hebrews ix. 11.

Gospel, St. John viii. 46.

The Collect.—We beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The solemn penitential season of Lent, from this day, turns our thoughts more particularly towards the passion and death of our Saviour Christ, Whose sufferings for our sins should excite in us the deepest repentance and godly sorrow for them. Hence this Sunday received the name of **PASSION SUNDAY**.

The **Epistle** suitably treats of His meritorious sacrifice, the only sacrifice which in and of itself could make atonement and satisfaction to infinite justice for the sins of the world. All those sacrifices, bloody and unbloody, whether of bulls and goats, or of the fruits of the earth, called meat and drink offerings, which the Divine Wisdom in the plan of man's salvation appointed, were only figures and shadows of that infinitely meritorious sacrifice, promised immediately after the fall, and in the fulness of time perfectly fulfilled by the death and passion of our Divine Redeemer, God and man in one person.

From this great original all other oblations and

sacrifices draw their whole virtue, having none in themselves considered. They are means of giving to the faithful receivers the benefit of Christ's sacrifice. Christ is the Priest, who acts by His commissioned servant; it is the blood of Christ, which, by the means of His divine appointment, cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. He inwardly works in the right use of the outward means. His death has destroyed death, and given back to man his lost inheritance, redeemed at the very great price of His blood, which He willingly offered for our ransom.

That He might be such a Mediator, able to suffer for us, He stooped from His eternal throne of glory, and took upon Him our human nature. He was pure and spotless, but able to feel all our sinless infirmities, sorrow in His soul and pain in His body; and He submitted to be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." As such, advancing to His cross and passion, this day's Gospel sets Him before us, bearing the contradiction of sinners, and the ungrateful treatment of the slaves whom He came to ransom. Their scorn and revilings He bore meekly, although He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, being very God incarnate (in the flesh), the great Jehovah, the I AM.

He it was Who appeared to Moses in the bush, when He came down to deliver His people from their Egyptian slavery. That bondage which made their lives bitter and their burden intolerable, was a faint type of the far more dreadful state of slavery under sin and Satan, from which

the Son of God redeemed all mankind, of His infinite mercy, and by great wonders. Most properly, therefore, the Church reminds us of the rescue from Egypt at this time, that she may lead us, in the devotions and meditations proper to the season, to the grateful commemoration of the surpassing reality, our deliverance from sin and death by the meritorious passion and death of our divine Redeemer.

We shall see also what a strong hold sin has upon its captive slaves, and how stroke after stroke is needful to force it from its grasp. It allows the sinner again and again, under present smart, to promise and resolve, and as often, when the pain is over for the time, to break his resolution. The unclean spirit cast out, returns with sevenfold more force, till at last hardness of heart, contemning God's word and commandments, and refusing to listen to all His merciful messages, and the ministers of them, drown the wretched sinner in the pit of everlasting destruction.

Suitably, therefore, to the season, feeling our misery, and panting for deliverance from our spiritual slavery, we beg that He would now look upon His people, as once He did upon the Israelites, suffering and sighing under their bondage in Egypt, and graciously guide and conduct them to their heavenly rest, preserving them to that end, both in body and soul.

Man is made up of body and soul, which union makes the perfect man. Their separation was the *effect of sin*; and till the redemption of the body *from the grave*, the perfect consummation and *bliss*, the glorious liberty of the children of God.

cannot be fully attained. But then the eternal life of joy and happiness shall begin. The death of our High Priest has wrought our deliverance. Now let us die with Him, that we may live with Him ; let us suffer, that we may also reign with Him ; rendering eternal love and joy to Him Who bore the shame and the pain of the cross for us men, and for our salvation. What shall we then render to Him for all His benefits ? We will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the holy Eucharist, take the cup of salvation, and call upon Him for pardon, grace, and glory, that we may praise and magnify Him for ever.

Sunday next before Easter.

THIS is PALM-SUNDAY, on which Christ came from Bethany to Jerusalem, and was received with joy, some spreading their garments, others cutting down branches and strewing them in the way ; whose religion it is fit we should imitate.

“We should meet Christ by keeping innocence,” says St. Bernard ; “bear olives, by doing works of mercy ; carry palms, by conquering the devil and our vices ; green leaves and flowers we carry, if we be adorned with virtues ; and we strew our garments in the way, when by mortification we put off the old man.”

Awake! why linger in the gorgeous town,
Sworn liegemen of the cross and thorny crown?
Up from your beds of sloth for shame,
Speed to the eastern mount like flame;
Nor wonder should ye find your King in tears,
Even with the loud hosanna ringing in His ears.

Alas! no need to rouse them; long ago
They are gone forth to swell Messiah's show:
With glittering robes and garlands sweet,
They strew the ground beneath His feet:
All but your hearts are there—O doom'd to prove
The arrows wing'd in Heaven for faith that will not

Meanwhile He paces through th' adoring crowd,
Calm as the march of some majestic cloud,
That o'er wild scenes of ocean-war
Holds its still course in heaven afar:
Even so, heart-searching Lord, as years roll on,
Thou keepest silent watch from Thy triumphant thron

Even so, the world is thronging round to gaze
On the dread vision of the latter days;
Constrain'd to own Thee, but in heart
Prepar'd to take Barabbas' part:
"Hosanna" now, to-morrow "Crucify,"
The changeful burden still of their rude lawless cry

Yet, in the throng of selfish hearts untrue,
Thy sad eye rests upon Thy faithful few;
Children and child-like souls are there,
Blind Bartimeus' humble prayer;
And Lazarus, waken'd from his four days' sleep,
Enduring life again, that Passover to keep.

And fast beside the olive-border'd way
Stands the blest home where Jesus deign'd to stay
The peaceful home, to zeal sincere
And heavenly contemplation dear;
Where Martha lov'd to wait with reverence meet,
And wiser Mary linger'd at Thy sacred feet.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. viii. 9.

All the sufferings of our Lord's life were but the beginning of sorrows with Him; to see their fulness we must look on to His passion. In the anguish which He then endured, we see all His other sorrows concentrated and exceeded.

I will observe this, which is very wonderful and awful, the overwhelming fear He had of His sufferings before they came. This shews how great they were; but it would seem, besides this, as if He had decreed to go through all trials for us, and among them the trial of fear. He says, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." And when the hour came, this terror formed the beginning of His sufferings, and caused His agony and bloody sweat. He prayed, "O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." St. Luke adds, "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (John xii. 27; Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xxii. 42.)

Next, He was betrayed to death by one of His own friends. What a bitter stroke was this! He was lonely enough without this: but in this last trial, one of the twelve Apostles, His own familiar friend, betrayed Him, and the others forsook Him and fled; though St. Peter and St. John afterwards recovered heart a little, and followed him. Yet soon St. Peter himself incurred a worse sin,



by denying Him thrice. How affectionately He felt towards them, and how He drew towards them with a natural movement of heart, upon the approach of His trial, though they disappointed Him, is plain from the words He used towards them at His last supper: "He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15).

Soon after this His sufferings began; and both in soul and in body was this holy and blessed Saviour, the Son of God and Lord of life, given over to the malice of the great enemy of God and man. Job was given over to Satan in the Old Testament, but within prescribed limits; first, the evil one was not allowed to touch his person, and afterwards, though his person, not his life. But Satan had power to triumph, or what he thought was triumphing, over the life of Christ, Who confesses to His persecutors, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). His head was crowned and torn with thorns, and bruised with staves; His face was defiled with spitting; His shoulders were weighed down with the heavy cross; His back was rent and gashed with scourges; His hands and feet gored through with nails; His side, by way of contumely, wounded with the spear; His mouth parched with intolerable thirst; and His soul so bedarkened, that He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46.)

And thus He hung upon the cross for six hours, His whole body one wound, exposed almost naked to the eyes of men, "despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2), and railed at, taunted, and cursed by all

who saw Him. Surely to Him alone, in their fullness, apply the prophet's words: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. i. 12).

How little are our sorrows to these! how little is our pain, our hardships, our persecutions, compared with those which Christ freely undertook for us! If He, the sinless, underwent these, what wonder is it that we sinners should endure, if it so be, the hundredth part of them? How base and miserable are we, for understanding them so little, for being so little impressed by them! Alas, if we felt them as we ought, of course they would be to us, at seasons such as is now coming, far worse than what the death of a friend is, or his painful illness. We should not be able at such times to take pleasure in this world; we should lose our enjoyment of things of earth; we should lose our appetite, and be sick at heart, and only as a matter of duty eat, and drink, and go about our work. The holy season on which we are entering would be a week of mourning, as when a dead body is in a house.

We cannot, indeed, thus feel, merely because we wish and ought so to feel. We cannot force ourselves into so feeling. I do not exhort this or that person so to feel, since it is not in their power. We cannot work ourselves up into such feelings; or if we can, it is better we should not, because it *is* a working up, which is bad. Deep feeling is but the natural or necessary attendant on a holy heart. But though we cannot ~~at once~~

will thus feel, and at once, we can go the thus to feel. We can grow in grace till we feel. And, meanwhile, we can observe such outward abstinence from the innocent plea and comforts of life, as may prepare us for feeling; such an abstinence as we should really observe if we did thus feel. We may taste upon Christ's sufferings, by which we gradually, as time goes on, be brought to deep feelings. We may pray God to do for what we cannot do for ourselves, to *make us* to give us the spirit of gratitude, love, reverent self-abasement, godly fear, repentance, holy and lively faith.

Oh shame beyond the bitterest thought
That evil spirit ever fram'd,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
Yet feel their haughty hearts untam'd—
That souls in refuge holding by the cross
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss !

Lord of my heart, by Thy last cry,
Let not Thy blood on earth be spent—
Lo ! at Thy feet I fainting lie,
Mine eyes upon Thy wounds are bent ;
Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parched earth on April skies.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears ;
O let my heart no further roam !
'Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since. O call Thy wanderer home,
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may

*Services for the Sunday next before Easter, or
Palm-Sunday.*

Morning Lessons : Exodus ix. ; St. Matt. xxvi.

Evening Lessons : Exodus x. ; Heb. v. to ver. 11.

Epistle, Philip. ii. 5.

Gospel, St. Matt. xxvii. 1.

The Collect.—Almighty and everlasting God, Who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility ; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also may be made partakers of His resurrection ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This day begins the most awfully solemn and mournfully affecting week of the whole year, the great, the holy Passion-week. "It is called the great week," says St. Chrysostom, "not because it consists of longer days, or more in number than other weeks, but because at this time great things were wrought for us by our Lord. For, in this week, the ancient tyranny of the devil was dissolved (destroyed), death was extinguished, the strong man was bound, his goods were spoiled, sin was abolished, the curse was destroyed, paradise was opened, heaven placed within our reach ; the God of peace made peace between things in heaven and things on earth ; therefore it is called the great week."

And he adds, in speaking of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem on this day, from which it had the

name of PALM-SUNDAY, "As the Jews went forth to meet Christ, when He had raised Lazarus from the dead, so now, not one city, but all the world go forth to meet Him, not with palm-branches in their hands, but with alms-deeds, humanity, virtue, tears, prayers, fastings, watchings, and all kinds of piety, which they offer to Christ their Lord."

And as the Church, so also the State, after it became Christian, added its sanction (approval) to the solemn observation of this week. Our own Church, which, as far as the self-indulgent temper of the present time will allow, treads in the steps of the primitive Church from which she is descended, distinguishes the holy week by a separate office for every day, and the whole service is devoutly fastened to the cross of our divine Redeemer, both God and man,—as man suffering, as God, in one person with His human nature, satisfying for the sins of the whole world. The iniquity of us all was laid upon Him—a load which nothing but His Almighty strength could support; Who, therefore, Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness, healed by His stripes.

Filled with the love of our suffering Lord, Whose suffering, to mark it from all others, is commonly called His *Passion*, we earnestly pray, in the pathetic *Collect* for the day (which is the *Collect* for the week, down to Good Friday), that we may be so conformed to His patient suffering, as that we may share in the joy and glory of His resurrection. And in the several *Epistles* and *Gospels* we hear and are melted down by the knowledge

and love of Christ crucified. Now, above all, our hearts are pierced by His divine word, while we see Him ascending Mount Calvary: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Each saying and in practice feeling with the blessed Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now lead in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Surely, then, we shall give ourselves to Him in return. But in vain we pretend to be His, if we harbour, or give the least entertainment to, any of those sins which were His murderers, the real cause of all His sufferings and sorrows. No, no! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24).

If we are really moved by our Saviour's sufferings, every part of the offices for this day and week will turn our thoughts thither. The wonders shewn forth in the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt will serve as a glass to reflect the far greater wonders which redeemed mankind from the tyranny of the devil. In Moses going out of the city, and stretching out his hands to calm the dreadful storm of thunder, fire, and hail, we shall see our Almighty Saviour on Mount Calvary, without the gates of Jerusalem, with His adorable hands stretched out upon the cross, turning away the divine vengeance from us all.

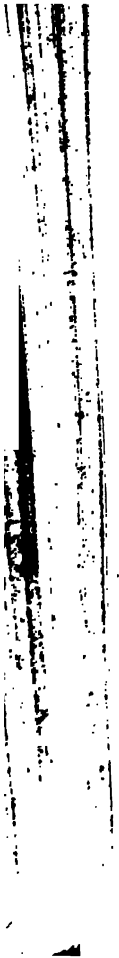
The overpowering subject of His infinitely meritorious death is far above our greatest stretch of thought, and all power of human words; and

therefore devout silence is the best expression of our contemplation of Him, Who was dumb before His murderers, and opened not His mouth but to pray for their pardon: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Thus He suffered for us, both as the propitiation for our sins, and the pattern of our lives and deaths, "leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps," and by looking unto Jesus, learn from His life and death how to live and how to die. If we die with Him, if we share in His cross, we shall share in His crown; and find that endless eternity shall not wear out the love and praise which we owe to Him for what He did and suffered to bring us to happiness.

For ever blessed be His holy name !







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